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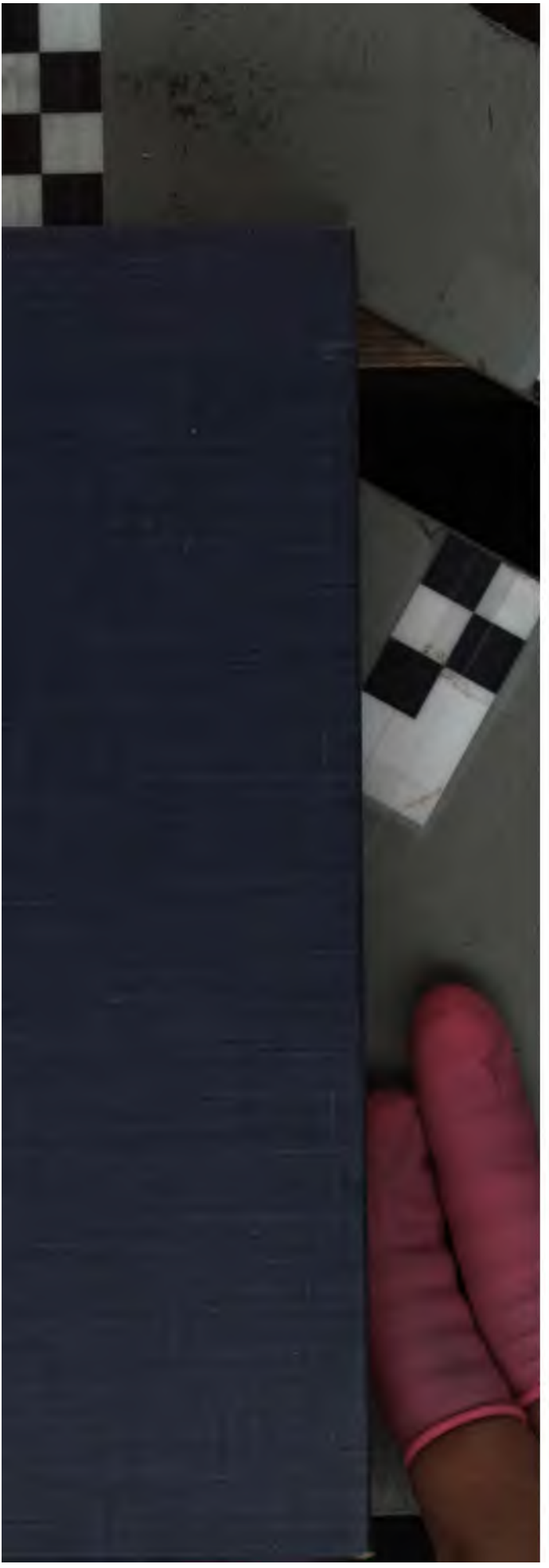

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THE WORKS OF

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

IN TWENTY-FOUR VOLUMES

LIMITED EDITION

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THE WORKS OF

THÉOPHILE GAUTIER

VOLUME TWENTY

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY
PROFESSOR F. C. DE SUMICHRAST
Department of French, Harvard University

PARIS BESIEGED

With an Introduction by the Editor

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Introduction

PARIS BESIEGED

Introduction

THERE must be some, there may be many, among the readers of this edition of Gautier's works, who remember the thrill of horror, the stupefaction of surprise caused by the announcement that the Germans had resolved to bombard Paris, invested by them after the fall of the Empire at Sedan and the rout of the French armies under MacMahon and other generals. The civilised world stood aghast at the thought that in the latter part of the nineteenth century a power, calling itself civilised and boasting of the high degree of learning and culture attained by its subjects, could deliberately order the shelling of a city unique in the world and inhabited by thousands of men, women, and children utterly guiltless of any offence towards the conquering Germans. The war, which had already, and so speedily, brought about the final overthrow of the Second Empire, was well-known to be the war of the

Empress Eugénie and her moody, weak-willed husband. The people of France, outside the Court party, had neither desired it nor called for it. It was undertaken as a last desperate effort to stay the tottering throne and to secure the succession of the Prince Imperial, doomed to die so tragic a death in later years. The ministry, presided over by Ollivier, was the tool of the Empress and entered upon the conflict, all unprepared as it was for the struggle, "with a light heart." When Douay, MacMahon, and Frossard were smashed one after another, when the Emperor and his army surrendered at Sedan and completed the unquestioned triumph of the Teuton arms, the new Republican government earnestly sought peace and found it not, for Bismarck was resolved to humble and crush, not merely the imperial house, but ancient France herself. So Paris was invested, and the bombardment was ordered.

That the capital would make any real resistance, least of all any prolonged resistance, was not believed; but Bismarck mistook or failed to understand the French character. It is excitable, imaginative, liable to sudden and inexplicable changes of feeling, now confident beyond all reason, now equally plunged in deep

despondency, but at bottom endowed with a tenacity of purpose and a resoluteness in execution for which sufficient credit is not ordinarily given to it. This was well proved by the heroic defence, not of the great capital only, but of Strasburg, of Phalsburg, and of Belfort, to name only the most splendid instances of patient and indomitable resistance. Thus the siege of Paris, which, it had been anticipated, would prove but child's play, turned out to be a most serious business and one which cost the Germans dear. The glory was not theirs in this case; they have no reason to be proud of the part they played on that occasion; but, on the other hand, the defence of Paris, as of the other fortified towns named above, is one of the most splendid of the many splendid memories of France.

It may be well to recall briefly the main facts in the history of that terrible campaign, which, begun with boisterous cries of "To Berlin! to Berlin!" ended with the march of the Prussians down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées.

The French Emperor, feeling his hold on the people greatly endangered, had, yielding to the counsels of the Empress and the Court party, made up his mind that a successful war was the readiest way of consolidating

his power and securing his throne. An opportunity seemed to be afforded him by the candidature of Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, who had been offered the Spanish crown. This was in July, 1870. On the sixth of that month, in the Corps Législatif, de Grammont declared that France would not allow "its interests and honour to be imperilled." The Hohenzollern candidature was withdrawn, and the incident seemed closed, undoubtedly to the chagrin of the Emperor and his circle. But a fancied slight, said to have been offered to Benedetti, the French ambassador, by King William, was eagerly made the most of, and on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, Paris resounded with shouts of "To Berlin! to Berlin!" Five days later war was declared, and in little more than a week the Emperor started for Metz, to take the chief command of the troops, leaving the Empress, as Regent, in the rose-embowered palace of Saint-Cloud. With him went the young Prince Imperial, who was to receive "the baptism of fire" upon the slopes of Saarbrück, where a demonstration in force was magnified into a brilliant victory.

This second of August was, however, all too speedily followed by the fourth of the same month,

when Douay was utterly defeated, and slain, at Wissemburg, with the result that Alsace was invaded and French territory fell into the hands of the Germans. MacMahon was next routed at Wörth, Fröschwiller, and Reichshoffen, and on the same day Frossard was served in similar fashion at Spickeren. The mainstay of the French defence — intended originally to be the attack — was completely destroyed. The Emperor and MacMahon fell back upon Sedan, Bazaine holding Metz. The incapable Lebeuf was removed from his command and the "glorious Bazaine" was appointed commander-in-chief, the Emperor abandoning the supreme military authority he had hitherto exercised, in name at least. The Ollivier ministry had fallen on receipt of the evil news from Wörth, and had been succeeded by one under the presidency of Palikao. At the same time Strasburg was invested and bombarded, holding out with superb gallantry under a rain of shells that wrought havoc infinite, and maintaining its defence from August 11 until September 28, when it was compelled to surrender. On September 1 and 2 was fought the battle of Sedan, that entailed the capitulation of the army and the surrender of the Emperor. At one stroke France lost its titular head — no great

loss in itself — one marshal, thirty-nine generals, eighty-six thousand men, ten thousand horses, and six hundred and fifty guns.

Paris proclaimed the downfall of the Empire and the establishment of the Third Republic; the Empress fled from the Tuileries, passing through the Louvre, and helped to escape by an American dentist, Dr. Evans, to that England which has invariably been the refuge of all Frenchmen fleeing from their land, from the Bourbon Charles X and the Orleanist Louis-Philippe to the unspeakable Rochefort, and the champion of Dreyfus and justice.

It was plain that Paris was in danger. The German armies were concentrating around it, and by September 18 the siege had begun. It lasted until January 29, and during the whole of that period the capital gave proof of stern steadfastness of purpose and heroic determination to resist. The men in the city were all called to the colours. The National Guard comprised two hundred and sixty-six battalions, those formed of the younger element being included among the marching regiments and intrusted, along with the line regiments in Paris, with the duty of taking part in the fierce and bloody sorties attempted in the hope of

breaking through the circle of fire and steel formed by the invader. The older men constituted the guard of the ramparts; the sailors and the Paris militia garrisoned the forts, and the provincial militia was added to Vinoy's corps, which had succeeded in escaping the disaster at Sedan and formed an army by itself.

It was on September 18 that the Prussian vanguards appeared before the city, and on the following day the victory of Châtillon gave von Moltke the command of the southern forts and quarters. King William, Bismarck, and von Moltke established their headquarters at Versailles, and it was in the great Gallery of Mirrors that, some weeks later, the King was proclaimed Emperor of Germany.

Bazaine was in Metz, making no real effort to break out, and starving his troops. Finally he surrendered on October 27, handing over to the Germans three marshals of France, six thousand officers, one hundred and seventy-three thousand men, thirteen thousand horses, one thousand six hundred and sixty-five guns, nearly three hundred thousand rifles, and all the colours.

This terrible disaster was at first kept from the knowledge of Paris, though news of it leaked in.

There was trouble within the capital itself, and civil war was on the point of breaking out among the besieged. There were men, numerous enough to cause anxiety to the authorities, who desired the establishment of a Commune and a more vigorous prosecution of the defence. It must be owned that the incapacity of General Trochu, commanding in chief, explained, if it did not justify, this disposition. As early as October 8 there occurred on the Place of the Hôtel de Ville, the traditional ground for riot and revolt, a manifestation in favour of the immediate creation of a Commune, but the danger was turned aside for the moment. On the 28th, 29th, and 30th, a great sortie was undertaken, and the village of Bourget was the scene of most desperate fighting, in which the French troops won distinction. On the 31st, the Government had to own that it was acquainted with Bazaine's treasonable surrender, and at once the National Guards of the Belleville quarter, then, as now, the hot-bed of discontent and agitation in Paris, attacked the Hôtel de Ville, but were repulsed.

Meanwhile starvation and sickness were adding to the havoc wrought by the bombardment. The winter was one of the most severe experienced for many years;

there was little or no means of heating houses; scarcely enough to cook the wretched rations of putrid horse-flesh that constituted the main diet of the heroic defenders. No help came from outside; the French armies created by Gambetta won a success here and there, only enough to keep hope alive in the breasts of the lovers of France, but the reverses were more numerous and greater. No aid, no intervention from abroad. Europe looked calmly on while the fairest city within its bounds was being laid waste in the most barbarous manner by so-called civilised troops. At last, on January 29, the city capitulated, conquered by famine.

All the world then believed it had seen the worst that could befall Paris. The crowning humiliation of seeing the Germans enter the mourning city had not been spared; the Teuton pride had been unable to deny itself that satisfaction. Yet worse was to come. The National Guards, especially the regiments formed in the more turbulent quarters, had sided with the mob that exists in every great city, and rallies to itself the worst elements in the community, and had carried off the guns parked on the Place Wagram. By a terrible oversight, these troops, so unreliable at a moment of

national excitement, when it was of the utmost importance that the peace should not be broken and the Government should be allowed to pursue its work of settlement and restoration undisturbed by other preoccupations,—these troops had been allowed to retain their arms. The mistake was sought to be corrected; too late, as it proved. General Lecomte was ordered to proceed to Montmartre, the hill upon which the guns had been placed by the insurgents, and to remove the artillery. His own men turned upon him and fraternised with the revolted Guards. Lecomte himself and General Thomas, who commanded in chief the National Guards of Paris, were made prisoners and shot in cold blood. The Government fled the city and removed to Versailles, where it at once assembled an army the command of which was given to Marshal MacMahon. Meantime the insurgents created the Central Commune in Paris and announced their resolve to resist all attempts to establish the authority of the Versailles government over them. There was nothing for it but to conquer the city, and the piteous sight was seen of Frenchmen strayed against Frenchmen around the capital of the land. The second siege, begun on April 3, was conducted vigorously and as stubbornly

resisted. On May 24, the Versailles troops managed to penetrate the city by the gate of the Point-du-Jour, at the western extremity. Then followed the most desperate and bloody street-fighting that Paris, well used to this form of warfare, had ever beheld. But the national troops would not be denied; brilliantly and courageously led, they stormed one barricade after another, and drove the criminal insurgents from their successive strongholds until they stood at bay in the great cemetery of Père-Lachaise, right in their own special quarter, and there, against a wall that may still be seen decorated with the blood-red emblems of the Commune, the last *fédérés* fell.

Terrible were the reprisals. The streets of Paris ran with blood, literally, not figuratively, during these dreadful days. Gallifet smote fiercely and unflinchingly the foe before him. Paris was blazing, for the Commune had resolved to have a funereal pomp worthy of itself. The most splendid monuments, the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, the Palace of Justice, the Préfecture de Police, the Ministry of Marine, the Cour des Comptes, the Palace of the Legion of Honour, the Palace of the Council of State, the Palace of the Tuileries, the Palace of the Louvre, with its priceless works of art, numbers

of houses and quarters, the Palais-Royal, the Théâtre-Lyrique, the Théâtre de la Porte-Saint-Martin, the Grenier d'Abondance, the docks at La Villette, — all were given over to the flames. The destruction was methodical. Paris was divided up into quarters for the purpose of conflagration. Each quarter had its own brigade of destroyers. The doomed buildings, whether public monuments or private property, were marked beforehand with wafers placed on a certain part of the doors. These wafers bore on the one side a Phrygian cap, and on the other the letters V P or B P B, which were understood to mean *Versez du pétrole* (Soak with petroleum) and *Bon pour brûler* (Burn down). Men first traversed the district and warned the inhabitants to clear out, as their houses were devoted to destruction. They were followed by bands of women and children carrying petroleum in all manner of utensils, whose business it was to soak all the woodwork with the oil, and to set fire to it, though often this was done by other incendiaries following in their wake. Other means used were the throwing of petroleum shells or bombs into the hatchways of cellars, nitro-glycerine and other explosives being also resorted to. Petroleum shells were fired upon the finest residential quarters,

and incalculable mischief wrought in this way. The fire-engines were frequently filled with petroleum, in order to feed instead of putting out the flames, and the water-pipes and mains were cut to prevent any attempt at rescue of the doomed buildings. Men were stationed to shoot down any one endeavouring to stay the progress of the conflagration. Notre-Dame was saved by the young house-surgeons of the Hôtel-Dieu, — which itself, though filled with Communist wounded, was attempted to be set on fire, — fighting the flames amid showers of bullets.

The fires started on the night of May 23–24, and for some days the capital was one vast furnace, in which the Versailles troops were fighting the insurgents and at the same time endeavouring to save the buildings. The Rue Royale, the Rue de Lille, the Rue du Bac were all ablaze, and both sides of the river and the island in its centre were foci of destruction.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that when the insurrection was at last suppressed, there was a general feeling that Paris was no longer a safe place for the headquarters of the National Government, and as the Assembly was then sitting at Versailles, a number of deputies joined in a motion to have the seat of govern-

ment transferred to the town that Louis XIV had created out of dislike to the great city of Paris. This was in July. The motion itself was as follows: "A committee of fifteen members shall be appointed for the purpose of reporting *at once* on the best means of suitably installing the various ministries in Versailles."

This naturally provoked an outburst of protests on the part of the Parisians, who felt deeply the imputation conveyed in the proposal. It is needless to discuss here and now the many reasons that might be, and many of which were, urged against the proposal, which, fortunately, was not carried; this much may be said, that the adoption of it would not merely have done injustice to Paris, but would have cost France and the world the historical palace of Versailles, unique in its way, for it would have suffered irremediably in the course of the transformations rendered necessary by the transference of the capital.

Gautier made a spirited and just plea against the proposal, in the concluding chapter of this book, entitled "Paris, the Capital," in the course of which he took occasion to point out the admirable manner in which the great city had stood out for France through good report and evil report, through siege and famine,

through all the stress and storm of the months of war. He showed that a capital is not to be created by a mere expression of will, and that it was impossible to make Versailles, even, rival ancient Lutetia. Versailles was the complete and perfect expression of a king who himself was the complete and perfect expression of his time. But Republican France was not and would not wish to be Louis XIV.

In some respects this is one of the most beautiful, and certainly one of the most touching books Gautier ever wrote. Naturally the circumstances under which the different articles, now chapters, were composed and given to the public account in part for the special charm of the work; but even more striking is the fact that not all the calamities due to the war, not all the suffering entailed by the siege, not all the horrors consequent on the creation of the Commune could dull, far less destroy the artistic sense in him, a sense he possessed to such a degree that it made him intensely human in his feelings for those around him and for the woes and sorrows that he daily beheld.

He need not have experienced the misery of being beleaguered and separated from those he loved, for when the war broke out he was in Switzerland, with one of

his daughters, Estelle, and Carlotta Grisi, in the lovely Montreux that nestles on the shores of Lake Leman. But on learning of the disasters that had befallen the national arms, he hastened back and reached the capital on September 9, just in time to be shut up with his fellow-townsmen and townswomen for the next four and a half months. Much of his occupation was gone, as he somewhat mournfully admits, and indeed he knew then, as so many more learned also at their own cost, the full measure of need and distress. But he kept up his heart, and the geniality of the man never manifested itself more plainly than in these dark and troubled days. The articles he wrote for the *Journal Officiel*, the *Illustration*, and the *Gazette de Paris*, are those reproduced here, and were subsequently included in volume form among his collected works under the title "Tableaux de Siège." They are not, as has already been said, either a diary of the siege or an attempt to follow the operations, but simply what the original title indicates more plainly than the one adopted here: pictures of the siege; tableaux seen here or there and carried away in the mind of the writer. The subjects are various, and do not appear always to be connected, yet they are all bound together by the one great fact of the invest-

ment, the bombardment, the famine, and Death stalking abroad; by the other great fact that Gautier remained the artist and the worshipper of Beauty that he was from his earliest years, and that he managed to see beauty even where most people, and by no means the least clear-sighted, would have recognised but horror and woe.

Take, for example, his account of the destruction wrought by the Commune,—the burning of the Cour des Comptes. The first thing that strikes him as he enters the precincts forbidden to the general public, is the *beauty* of the ruins—the italics are his own. He feels that he will be blamed for seeing this and not being, on the contrary, swayed by anger, carried away by hatred of the fiends who have done the evil; but there it is, and as it is there and he worships beauty, he must needs speak of it. This is not detachment from things human and contempt for the sufferings of the masses or the individuals; far from it, it is the natural expression of a sentiment that forms an essential part, the main part of his nature. Sympathy for the suffering he has in abundance; the tender biographies of Regnault and Giraud testify to that; sympathy for the brute creation also, as is proved by the chapters on the

"Animals during the Siege," and there are few passages, in the literature composed by the friends of the dog, more touching, more true than the lines he penned upon the abandoned dogs straying through the streets of the city in search of a master, of a human being on whom they could bestow their love, and whom they could reward with undying affection in return for a morsel of food.

He saw the picturesque side of the scenes presented by the altered aspect of the place he had known from childhood, and that now showed itself in its warlike guise. How many, besides Gautier, could have found in the rectilineal lines of the ramparts any touch of that magic beauty he esteemed so highly and so rightly? Many of us have gone on that urban river trip which he so charmingly describes, yet how many have been able, even to themselves, to describe it as he has done? Then when, the Germans having come and gone out of the capital they hated, yet envied, and which they were determined to darken with their presence, Gautier was able, with thousands of his hitherto beleaguered fellow-citizens, to issue forth once more, what an admirable chapter, full of suggestiveness, of breadth of view, as well as of superb description, and

true feeling for the art of Greece and Rome, an art he had combated in his hot youth, does the Halt of Communist Prisoners on the Place d'Armes at Versailles inspire him with! It is a philosophical as well as an artistic piece of work. And this Versailles, now the headquarters of the French army besieging the very Paris he but so lately left, leads him back into the past, and we have the beautiful descriptions of the palace gardens as they existed under Louis XIV. We know much more about the Versailles of the Great King than was known in 1871, for the love of research and the care for the intelligent preservation of historical monuments have made great strides since that day; yet it is most delightful to follow Gautier down the green embowered walks and into the groves that then, as now, were filled with song of birds and whispered memories of the Great Age of France. Much that he describes as being damaged or ruined or vanished altogether, has been repaired, restored, renewed, and one cannot help regretting that the Romanticist who could so heartily own his youthful mistakes and proclaim Versailles "still unrivalled in the world; the supreme formula of a complete art and the highest expression of a civilisation that had reached its fullest development,"

had not been spared to see the very restorations he desired carried out so artistically and so thoroughly. Versailles is left, if Saint-Cloud is no more, and Paris has arisen from the ashes of the Communist fires more beautiful, more fascinating, more interesting than ever.

Paris Besieged

PARIS BESIEGED

I

A NEW MADONNA
THE STRASBURG STATUE

SEPTEMBER, 1870.

ON traversing the Place de la Concorde, enlivened by the evolutions and the marching of the troops, one's attention is attracted by the ever changing group at the foot of the statue that represents Strasburg, which from the top of its pedestal, as it were from the top of an altar, looks down majestically upon the prostrate multitude. A new worship has been instituted; one that will have not a single dissentient. The sacred statue is adorned like a Madonna, and never has a devotional figure been covered with more ornaments by the faithful. It is true that these are neither dresses embroidered with pearls nor mantles of gold brocade gemmed with rubies and sapphires, such as are worn by the Toledo

Virgin. Instead she has tricolour flags, forming a sort of warlike tunic rayed with streaks of generous blood.

Upon her battlemented crown have been placed garlands of flowers, and the statue almost disappears under the heaped-up bouquets and the patriotic *ex-votos*. At night, Venetian lanterns are lighted, like unto the small tapers set burning by pious souls in churches before the figures of the Divine Mother, and illumine the impassible and serene figure. Not the least contraction of its proudly beautiful features betrays the fact that the seven swords of pain have been driven into its breast, and when the rosy light of the lanterns flits over its pallid lips it almost seems to smile.

Around it flutter streamers bearing patriotic inscriptions, and on the pedestal are inscribed expressions of love and admiration. Verses and stanzas are pencilled, and while art is not always visible in these effusions, feeling is never absent from them. At the foot of the pedestal stands wide open a large register, upon which signature follows signature. The people of Paris are putting their names down as callers upon the City of Strasburg. The volume, which is to be splendidly bound and blazoned with the arms of the glorious city,

is to be presented to the great martyr that has offered itself up for the honour and salvation of France, and no city will ever have held in its archives a more glorious Golden Book.

By one of those exquisitely gracious impulses that at times thrill the masses, the people of Paris seem, by their adoption of this statue as a sacred image, as a sort of Palladium, and by worshipping it constantly, to seek to compensate the unfortunate city by giving it a proof of ardent sympathy, and to back it up to the best of their ability in its heroic resistance.

How often, during the short holidays which the summer time brings to the newspaper man, have I traversed Strasburg on my way to Baden, Wiesbaden, Heidelberg, Munich, or Stuttgart. I always broke my journey there, and paid a visit to my old friend the Cathedral. Every time I found its lofty spire rising heavenwards with the unchanged faith of former days. Upon its red granite walls the rust of time showed green in spots, as upon armour of copper-work. The saints kept watch in their lace-work niches, and under the portal the Wise and the Foolish Virgins marched in unbroken symbolical procession. Punctually at noon the Twelve Apostles moved around Jesus-Christ upon

the astronomical clock, the work of Schwilgué, which has taken the place of that of Conrad Dasypodius.

From the corner of the square the statue of Erwin of Steinbach, the architect of the Cathedral, cast on me a friendly smile as if to say that he recognised me. The storks flew away, their long legs outstretched behind them, just as in the vignettes by Delalain, or stood on their nests at the top of the huge roofs with six stories of dormer windows that are peculiar to Strasburg.

I loved the city for its picturesque appearance and the various minor peculiarities of detail and character that are significant of the surrounding country and that are to be met with in frontier towns. Nevertheless, Strasburg was French, very French indeed, and it is testifying to the fact to-day in the most conclusive manner.

Who could then have foreseen that this lovely, peaceful city, the home of study and learned investigation, warlike, all the same, in spite of its patriarchal, kindly look, and girding itself with a belt of guns, would one day be attacked with such incredible fury? When, at night, I gazed upon Charlie's Wain, the Little Bear, and Cassiopeia, glittering like golden dots behind the dark lace-work of the Cathedral, who would

have thought that the soft starlight would ever be eclipsed by the sinister flaming of shells? Yet a rain of iron falls night and day upon the Cathedral, smashing the finials, mutilating the statues, breaking in the vaulting of the nave, and damaging the clock with its multitude of figures and its millions of wheels. The library, unique in its way, has been burned to the ground. Incunables from the old Commandery of Saint John of Jerusalem, the *Hortus deliciarum* given by Herrada of Landsberg, who was abbess of Sainte-Odile at the end of the twelfth century, the poem of *The War of Troy*, composed by Conrad of Wurtzburg, the poems of Gaspard of Hagenau, missals, breviaries, manuscripts with miniatures, one hundred and fifty thousand volumes of the greatest value, have been reduced to ashes. The Rue de la Nuée-Bleue (the Blue Cloudlet), a romantic name that takes my fancy, has lost several of its houses, and the theatre is but a mass of débris.

Yet maugre all these disasters, the Spartan city maintains its heroic resistance, and its great soul refuses to be cast down; sooner than surrender, it will bury itself under its own ruins. The brave general Ulrich stands firm against the frightful rain of fire. In spite of the

conflagrations that break out everywhere like flames on tripods, and that burn the folds of its robe upon its flesh, the sublime city shakes its head at every offer of capitulation, and Germany summons up still heavier guns and orders them to blast the insolent town.

Rebellious and obstinate, Strasburg refuses to remember its German origin, and bears in mind but one thing: that it gave itself to France with all its heart and soul, and that it is determined to die for her. But die it shall not. Though the blazing sky be traversed by shells, bombs, and balls, the Cathedral still stands, and on the dark profile of the spire still shows the cross of light, symbol of hope and salvation, which the enemy on the other side of the Rhine sees glittering yet.

II

A TRIP BY WATER

October, 1870.

DOES not Paris impress one as a huge city capable of tiring out the most indefatigable of pedestrians? Well, since it has become impossible to leave it, the long length of walls annoys and confines the population as a belt too tightly drawn. The Bois de Boulogne, Meudon, Saint-Cloud, Ville d'Avray, Versailles, Vincennes and all the lovely sites that extend beyond Charenton, along the banks of the Marne, are forbidden ground to us. Within the city itself, the palace gardens have been transformed into camps and artillery parks, as have also the squares where children used to play. Then, as if to excite still further the desire for change which, at this time of year, drives the laziest and the most sedentary to travel, the weather is pitilessly splendid; an implacably serene sky, cloudless but for the distant smoke of guns, is outspread over our heads, nor is the

azure against which stand out the minarets of Cairo and the pillars of the Parthenon more perfectly transparent and pure. Nature often indulges in irony of this sort; its joys and sorrows do not coincide with ours, it takes no care to be in harmony with the state of our souls, and at times one feels like blaming it for its indifference to human affairs. Yet, bitter though the grief one feels, grieved to the heart though one may be, it is difficult not to feel somewhat the spell of the deep serenity, of the light that falls upon the darkness of one's soul, of the joy that is unconscious of one's sorrow. Things smile as well as weep, and so one goes down into the street, dropping the book that was being read but mechanically, forsaking the page which has failed to attach the thought, and unconsciously one's feet lead one to the quay, towards the wide, open space of the Seine filled with air and sunshine, animated by the rush of the waters, where one seems to breathe more freely than anywhere else.

The river steamers are going up and down with the speed of the dory, meeting and passing on their way, taking and putting down passengers at the landing-places along the river, now on the right, now on the left, according to the importance of the quarter. But

whether they are going up or down, they are always full; the cabin is crammed, the decks are crowded, and there is no chance of getting a seat save at the farthest starting-places. The small fare charged, fifteen centimes, no doubt accounts in part for the extraordinary popularity of these river boats, but it is not the only cause thereof. The trip one makes upon them is a sort of travel on a small scale that takes the place of the excursions the enemy has put a stop to; it gives one the illusion of liberty, and people go from the Point-du-Jour to Charenton just as formerly they went round the Lake in the Bois.

And indeed it is a delightful trip that enables one to see Paris under an unfamiliar aspect; so, as my profession of dramatic critic is at present a very leisurely one, I shall even go on board at the nearest landing-stage, and you may believe me, on my word as a tourist, that I have often gone very far afield to see less lovely views.

The start is made from the landing-stage near the Pont Napoléon, and on looking under the arches of the bridge one can see the works of the dam that protect the course of the stream, and the high chimney-stalks of the factories that look like Egyptian obelisks.

The boat is under way, and the shores fly past on either side like bands unwound, enabling one to behold many varied aspects of the banks. Bercy comes in sight with its rows of barrels upon the wharf, the houses bathed in sunshine, its shops, its signs in huge letters, and between the buildings groups of trees, above which rise a few tall poplars that, though the autumn is already well advanced, have retained their summer green. Besides, the weather is so mild that naked boys are bathing along the bank, or, up to the waist in the water, are fishing for stickle-backs with a handkerchief. Grooms are taking horses to water; women kneeling upon a handful of old straw are washing their linen in the river, for the suburban laundresses no longer come on their regular days with their little hand-carts, and Paris, in order to make sure of a clean shirt, has had to take up the washing business for itself.

The whole length of the quay is extremely full of life; people are going and coming, ascending and descending, carrying all manner of wares, piling up logs, storing up boards and beams in regular courses. This activity in the brilliant light has a look of joy, and in spite of the sad condition in which we find

ourselves, the sight of human activity under a fair sky is always cheerful. "What a blaze there would be if a shell lighted upon these piles of wood," said, near me on the boat, one of those prudent beings who are constantly foreseeing all sorts of misfortunes. — "Well, we should turn the river on it, — the easiest thing in the world."

It was long since I had come into this quarter, and the place looked like a new town to me. Men who knew the old Paris would find it difficult to recognise in the row of superb houses and sumptuous restaurants the old Quai de la Râpée, with its eating-houses daubed red all over like a toper's mug, that used to smile so ruddily through the foliage of the arbours and the shade of the chestnut trees. This place was famous for its fish chowders, and rowing men were accustomed to stop off here, proving that if they were fond of water they none the less liked wine, for at that time no one knew aught of absinthe, Angostura, vermouth, and other bitters eagerly sought for by people with ruined digestions. Beer was contemned, and Gambrinus had not dethroned Bacchus; people got tipsy on the generous juice of the grape, a truly French beverage. But modern luxury has done away

with these modest wine-shops, veritable nests of genuine gaiety.

At this point the Seine broadens out considerably and forms a basin in which sailing-boats formerly loved to tack to and fro, Asnières not being then fashionable. Just now this part of the river resembles the Grand Canal at Venice. The river craft have taken refuge within the city: great decked barges, shining with pitch, with a green stripe running round them as round the Dutch treschuits; ferry-boats fastened with wooden treenails, steamers, tug-boats, galliots, clippers, dinghies, gigs, yawls, shells, boats of every build. The upright masts ray the blue air with salmon-coloured tones, and at their trucks flutter tiny burgees blown out by the east wind that drives our letters beyond the ramparts and the forts, away above the enemy's spiked helmets. But in the midst of the peaceful fleet stand out vessels of grim and formidable appearance, their prows armed with rams like those of Roman galleys. The stern is sunk deep as if to make the bows rise out of water. Their plated sides, striated with port-holes, are painted a stern gray, and they look like orks in the midst of a school of herring, the resemblance being the closer on account

of some of these craft having, near the cutwater, a couple of black holes edged with red, that recall the eyes of certain fish. These are the gunboats charged with the duty of protecting the course and the banks of the stream.

The bridge at Bercy is a very elegant one, with its circular traceried openings; it spans the river gracefully with three or four arches.

As no rain has fallen for several weeks, the water is marvellously clear and presents to the blue expanse of heaven a perfectly clear mirror. Great smooth azure spaces and shimmering golden lights spread over the emerald-green surface and reminded me of the celestial serenity of Lake Leman. Ziem, William Wyld, and other masters of water-colour painting could have found there the suavity and delicacy of tones they seek in Venice, Constantinople, and Smyrna.

As we shot under the Pont d'Austerlitz, which leads to the Botanical Gardens, I smiled at the thought of the proposal, mentioned in the press as one of the more or less absurd means of defence suggested by the fertile imagination of inventors, namely, to let loose in the woods around Paris the lions, tigers, panthers, jaguars, and bears, black and white alike, from the menagerie.

Of course it would be necessary to provide each of the wild beasts with an album containing the uniforms of the Prussian army in colours, else they might unwittingly devour militiamen, regulars, and even francs-tireurs. Nor is this at all impracticable, since the Lion of Saint Mark, as every one knows, holds a book in its paw.

From the deck of the water omnibus we could see, upon the sloping beaches of the quays, national guards and militiamen drilling, going through the manual and manœuvring under the directions of their drill-masters, with indefatigable zeal. In more retired places, prentice drummers were beating their ass's-skins with yet imperfectly handled sticks, for it takes time to become a virtuoso of the *ra* and *fla*. What they performed best was the charge. Farther still, other prentices, buglers these, blew into their instruments with a persistency that involved their having lungs as powerful as those of Æolus of old. The roll of the drums and the clarion blasts were martially joyous; the bugle sounds loud, clear, and vigilant, like the crow of the cock.

The Isle Louviers, where of yore I used to scale the piles of lumber that stood, in our schoolboy battles, for

imaginary fortresses, no longer exists; it has been incorporated with the mainland and is now covered with houses. A few of the piles of the dam alone remain to recall the former appearance of the place. Here are Petit's Baths, where years ago, after severe tests, I won the right to wear the scarlet drawers, the aim of my secret ambitions, and the long Quai de l'Île Saint-Louis, where, on Sundays, Sainte-Beuve, the Sainte-Beuve of the *Consolations*, used to walk sunk in thought.

The Tournelle bridge, spoiled by a lot of little iron arches with which it has been adorned for the purpose of widening it, is soon left behind, and Notre-Dame de Paris comes in sight, its apse resting upon its flying-buttresses, and the two giant towers rising like arms ever raised in prayer. At the intersection of the nave the bold, traceried spire, with the cross surrounded with rays, that is to be seen in old engravings, has been restored. Formerly the place where it sprang was marked by a sheet of lead, the plaster on the cicatrice left by the amputation.

Nothing finer can be seen than the old cathedral which Victor Hugo adopted for the heroine of his epic, looked at from the level of the Seine and stand-

ing upon the point of the island, formed like a ship's prow, that cuts the river in two. A park of artillery has been installed in the square that had been laid out behind the apse, and Quasimodo's uncouth shade seems to gaze with amazement from the top of the towers upon these formidable engines of war, as if wondering whether a new assault is to be directed against his beloved Notre-Dame and whether it is not the secret intention of these gunners of the National Guard to carry off Esmeralda.

We shoot under the bridge which has replaced the Pont Rouge, and the remembrance of the latter recalls Barbara's dramatic novel, "The Murder on the Pont Rouge." The sound of drums and bugles is heard in the peaceful Île de Saint-Louis, startled at the warlike noise.

The steamer runs past the Quai de l'Hôtel de Ville, the silhouette of the building standing out against a background of utterly clear sky. Its diminished roofs have not the proud look Boccadoro had given them, but the mass of the building shows to advantage on the skyline. Somewhat back of it rises Saint-Gervais, with its façade by Jacques Desbrosses, rather overpraised, methinks. The landing stage is full of life: a crowd

of crafts surges against the quay; swimming-schools and cheap baths have moored there and form a most picturesque riot.

Soon the Théâtre-Lyrique and the Théâtre du Châtelet show up foreshortened above the skyline, with their Italian-like open loggia. On the other bank the Tribunal du Commerce exhibits its dome, which is intended to close the prospect at the foot of the Boulevard de Sébastopol. We pass like an arrow under the Pont Notre-Dame, entirely restored, but artists still regret its old square, slate-roofed tower, resting upon a maze of huge piles that obstructed one of the arches and forced the waters back along the quay under the Devil's Arch, a perilous spot, as dreaded by the boatmen of the Seine as is the Pont Saint-Esprit by the mariners of the Rhone. The memory of the old tower has been preserved in an admirable etching by Méryon, the Rembrandt of Old Paris. Next comes the Pont au Change, rebuilt and modernised, and the Palais de Justice shows with its Clock Tower, its pepper-pot roofed towers, its old walls pierced with mullioned windows, in which the newer portions, awkwardly set in, make unpleasant blotches. Yet it would have been so easy to adopt the style of the old

buildings for the needed additions, and thus to preserve the Gothic mien of that cradle of antique Lutetia that once was all there was of Paris.

The vessel travels so fast there is scarcely time to glance at the quaint masks carved by Germain Pilon under the cornice of the Pont Neuf. On turning round, however, a splendid view opens up. The Pont Neuf, with its peninsula on which rises the Chalet of the Vert-Galant, and the mass upon which stands on horseback the bronze king, forms the foreground. Behind, above the houses, rises Notre-Dame with its square towers and its pointed spire, the traceried and gilded spire of the Sainte-Chapelle and the pepper-pot turrets of the Palais de Justice. There is no finer view in the world.

In the opening formed by the Place de Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois shoots up the new belfry which serves as steeple to the old church, and which was to have been provided with one of those cheerful sets of Flemish chimes that change "into joyous song the serious voice of the Hours." Its white colour looks well against the background of blue sky.

And now comes the Louvre of Louis the Great, with its majestic colonnade by Perrault that was preferred to

the designs of the Cavalier Bernini, the Louvre of Henry IV and Henry II. Numerous workmen are busy blocking up the ground-floor windows with bags of earth, for there are the statues of antiquity, there blooms that divine type of beauty, that immortal piece of marble called the Venus of Milo. A large iron reservoir connected with the river, and fitted with a pipe leading to the roof, is installed on the quay. Alas! such precautions make one blush. One wonders whether time has not gone back, and whether the days of barbarism have returned. If the Venus of Milo were to be smashed, one of the suns of the ideal would disappear, and night would fall upon art. Such an outrage upon beauty, so monstrous a sacrilege, cannot be possible! Yet it must not be forgotten that the Count of Koenigsmark, who blew up the powder magazine in the Parthenon, hitherto intact, and who pointed the gun himself, was a Prussian. There is no greater crime than to mutilate Phidias, to destroy a masterpiece. Let us hope that the splendid deity, who is no Venus but a Victory, will know how to defend herself.

On the other side of the river, at the end of the Pont des Arts, the peaceful Institute is also taking

precautions against possible consequences of the siege. The helmeted Minerva, which forms the crest upon its programmes, has lowered her visor, for Minerva, the goddess of Wisdom, is armed, and besides her helmet, her ægis, her buckler, and her lance, she has at her side the night-owl, the faithful watcher, from whom darkness has nothing hid. Prudently inspired by its Athenian protectress, the Institute has blocked up the windows of the Mazarin Library with bags of earth, and placed in the courts huge iron tanks full of water. Let us hope that no projectiles will smash in the cupola under which have been spoken so many harangues full of allusions, insinuations, and epigrammatic praises. Formerly, as may be seen in the contemporary engravings by Israel Sylvestre, that portion of the quay which formed a sort of substructure of the Institute was adorned with trophies and carvings that were very effective, and the disappearance of which is to be regretted.

At the corner of the Pont du Carrousel, on the Quai Saint-Nicolas, are working experimentally very powerful steam fire-engines. White steam bursts from the funnel, and the hose, a long leathern serpent with brazen head, sends out a jet of water, big, strident,

impetuous as a cloudburst, that, with the sound of a rocket, rises as high as the jets of the fountains of Saint-Cloud or the Tuileries and then falls in silvery spray. There were several of these fire-engines at work, and they were throwing the water to a great distance. They will quickly extinguish any blaze started by shells and petroleum shells, if these destructive engines of war manage to reach us. Numerous spectators, leaning upon the quay wall and the railing of the bridge, were watching the performance with very natural interest.

The working of fire-engines did not interfere with the drummers and buglers who were practising in the garden of the Vigier Baths, the clumps of trees in which, still green, break so pleasantly the architectural lines of the Tuileries. The martial sounds recalled one's thoughts to the war which the serene beauty of the prospect might well have relegated far from stern reality.

Opposite the Vigier Baths, behind a wash-house, at the foot of the quay wall, is situated a shanty always surmounted by a plume of smoke, and to which attention is drawn by the new lumber of which it is built. It is a pumping station working directly from the Seine with the object of supplying the quarters on the left bank in

the event of the foe cutting the Ourcq canal. You see that everything has been provided for.

Near the Pont Royal, opposite the Café d'Orsay, the training frigate, transformed into a hydropathic establishment, with its tall masts, its rigging, and its yards, from which hang coloured metal balls, imparts to this nook a very picturesque maritime air, and makes one think of the plan to turn Paris into a seaport, a plan that could have been carried out at less cost than a year of barren and destructive war.

How rich is the aspect, when lighted by this fine autumn sun and when seen from below, — a point of view that always improves the lines and produces new effects, — up the recently rebuilt pavilion at the corner of the Tuileries, which still preserves its golden whiteness. Carpeaux' figures and groups, smitten by the warm light, stand out from the façade with amazing intensity of life. The sculptor seems to live and move. The young woman kneeling and parting the foliage, and accompanied by little genii, is of flesh and not stone, a fact that may tell against the reposefulness of the architecture, which prefers that the guests it lodges on its pediments, archivolts, and friezes, should maintain quiet and symmetrical attitudes. Now from this point

of view it is not to be denied that Carpeaux' figures are regular romps, but then life in art is a quality of such supreme value that everything may be pardoned for its sake.

On the top of the Clock Pavilion flies the flag of the Geneva International Society, a cross gules on a field argent. The palace has been transformed into an ambulance, and in the gardens the statues by Coysevox, Coustou, Lepautre, and Théodon gaze with surprised looks out of their great white eyes upon the parks of artillery, the cannons, bronze dogs of war that are but too eager to bark, the tents within which the soldiers take refuge, and upon all the warlike array which Paris ought never to have beheld. For was not Paris the neutral city above all others? The real capital of the world? The very brain and eye of the Universe? Above the trees circle the pigeons disturbed in their habits, and the sparrows ask each other in their language what has become of the *charmer*. Meanwhile the Sebastopol sphinxes and Barye's lions, impassible sentries in marble and bronze, go on keeping watch and ward.

What a wonderful basin is that formed by the Seine between the Pont Royal and the Pont de la Concorde!

On the right, above the quay, the Tuileries terrace, with its pilastered balustrade and its crown of great trees, the green of which autumn has tinted with saffron; on the left, the Palace d'Orsay, the pretty palazzino of the Legion of Honour, the Spanish Embassy, the Cercle agricole, and, seen in profile, so as to face the Madeleine, the Palace of the Corps Législatif (Chamber of Deputies, or Palais-Bourbon), which in the distance has somewhat the look of a Greek temple. Of course it is not the Parthenon, but at a distance and with the magical effects of light and of perspective and the breaking of the lines due to the silhouette of the trees massed near the bridge, the effect on the horizon is incomparably charming. In the background the hills of Meudon and Sèvres swell, blurred and softened in the bluish haze, with a sweetness of tone that recalls the backgrounds of Claude Lorrain.

While the steamer is proceeding down stream, leaving behind it a foaming wake, the guns and artillery waggons swing along the quay at a rapid trot with the thundering roar of the car of Capanea storming across the brazen bridge, and the bayonets of regiments on the march shine in the sun like the ears of a harvest

of steel. The rhythmic beat of the drum and the ringing clarion blast accompany one everywhere; unparalleled military activity is everywhere evident, and the time for dreaming has passed away.

Nevertheless, all this bustle fails to disturb the fishermen, for rod fishers are naturally philosophical and phlegmatic. I saw great numbers of them between Bercy and the Point-du-Jour; some were in the water half-way up to their knees, like herons on the watch; others were standing in the bows of a boat; others were seated, their legs dangling over a quay wall; others again were perched on the cornice of a bridge; but every one of them was watching with the most intense attention the bobbing of a cork float or rebaiting his hook, no doubt in order to justify the rather harsh axiom: "A fishing rod is a tool with a worm at one end and a fool at the other."

These worthy people did not appear to be troubling their heads with thoughts of the Prussians, and had shells fallen into the water by them they would have merely remarked, "This sort of thing will frighten away the fish."

It may be that among them there are those who see in this innocent occupation an opportunity of adding a

dish of fish to the somewhat monotonous siege bill of fare, but the others fish with disinterested enthusiasm, hopelessly, as is the case with every genuine passion. They never catch anything, yet they always return. I did, however, see a fortunate fisherman bring up at the end of his line a gudgeon a couple of inches long that squirmed like a silver flash.

Beyond the Pont de la Concorde the Seine forms a slight bend, on the one side of which is the Hôtel de la Présidence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and on the other the drives of the Cours-la-Reine, topped by the glazed roof or the Palace of Industry, which look like the domes of some huge hot-house glittering in the sun. The fine lines of the quay impart to the prospect a grandiose and monumental aspect that leaves an impression of solemnity.

At the Pont de l'Alma we salute the Zouave and the linesman carved with proud port upon the piles, who appear to be guarding the stream against the approach of the foe; we salute also the dome of the Invalides, damascened with gold, like a Saracen helmet, and which is seen shining in the heavens when one turns to look back towards Paris. It has been recommended to dull the gilding with a coat of wash. Let it not be done!

Who would dare to fire upon the refuge of the crippled brave? And besides, what would the Invalides care if they did bear one more cicatrice?

Horses led by their riders are coming down the quay slopes on the side of the Military school to bathe or drink in the stream. Handsome indeed are these noble animals which share man's perils, when ridden bare-backed and led by soldiers in linen trousers, whose shirts fall into folds like the chlamys of antiquity when the wind is blowing. In these groups one comes across the simple yet proud turns seen on the metopes of the Parthenon, and since there is no Phidias here, why does not a Géricault come along? What models he would find among these horses that are coming and going and some of whom rear as they feel the coldness of the water. There were mules also, easily known by their long ears, and worthy of drawing the car of the Princess Nausicaa on her way to the bath. Let us not despise these useful animals that stand fatigue so well: they transport the heavy baggage and the wounded, who balance each other on the litters. If they do not go to glory, they do go to hard work, and we should not forget it. Oxen with curved legs, to quote the fine Homeric expression, standing on the bank of the

river, are raising their heads with a look of vague anxiety, and the water drips in long streams from their shining mouths.

On the Jena bridge, that, like most of our bridges,—Austerlitz, Arcole, Solferino, Alma,—bears the name of one of our victories, regiments of the line are passing on their way to the heights of Chaillot, and down the quay, in the direction of the Commissariat, itself in full blast, ride squadrons of gendarmerie. Everything speaks of war and preparations for defence; even the four equestrian groups on the approaches to the Jena bridge seem to be neighing and breathing in the smell of powder.

The troops start from the Champ de Mars, on which stand long rows of wooden huts intended to shelter the soldiers. The whole extent of that vast space has been transformed into a camp, and no one could believe that scarcely three years ago rose on that same spot the huge iron and glass Babel called the Palace of the Universal Exposition. In the mazes of that colossal building were stored the wonders of civilisation and peace, the highest efforts of human genius; art rubbed elbows with industry; white statues stood by the side of black engines, and paintings were displayed close by

the rich stuffs of the East; for the great artists of every country had sent on their finest pictures, the masterpieces to which they owed their fame. Every nation had endeavoured to exhibit its very best. To walk under the lofty arches of that cathedral of labour was to pass from wonder to wonder, and as one beheld the innumerable prodigies one felt pride in being a man. So lofty was the vaulting that an engine was needed to enable one to ascend to it, and the roof, with its red arcading framing in the blue heaven, impressed one with the same sense of immensity as does the Coliseum at Rome.

Round the monstrous edifice were scattered in lovely flower gardens, that had sprung up from the ground like fairy settings at the whistle of the scene-setter, Egyptian temples, their pylones covered with hieroglyphs, mosques, okkels, konaks, palaces like unto those of *The Thousand and One Nights*, in the purest Arab style, Swiss chalets, Russian isbas, Norwegian fishermen's huts, Chinese pagodas, Japanese houses, shops for the sale of Protestant Bibles, and even a facsimile reproduction of the Roman catacombs. I need not recall the beer-gardens in which Vienna and Munich poured out their inexhaustible stores of beer, the Al-

gerian cafés with their droning, nasal music, the bewitching strains of the Hungarian gipsies, the Aïssouas who ate fire and snakes; it was the great world's fair alongside the Universal Exposition, the smaller drama by the greater. There was nothing lacking, not even the equestrian statue of King William, which we were polite enough not to consider too ridiculous; not even the famous Krupp gun with which we are threatened and which we did not greatly admire, for those were the days of the fine, peaceful contests that do honour to the human mind, and no one supposed that that frightful engine of war was ever to be put to use.

Emperors, kings, sultans, and princes came with jealous politeness to visit the fair city, the object of their secret envy, and Paris gave them splendid entries and welcomed them with its brightest smile, never dreaming of the rancour excited by its splendour.

Who could believe now that on this empty space, strewn with straw here and there, and from which the smoke of bivouac fires is rising, once stood the dream-like fairy building? Near as the time is, it seems as if ages had elapsed since that day. It was too fair to last. The Moiræ, the stern deities whom the pride of men and nations offends, enjoy wrecking such deceitful

prosperity and urge it on to ruin with their own skinny hands. But misfortune strengthens brave hearts, and we shall emerge victorious from the struggle.

On the slope of the Trocadero, climbed by a broad flight of steps that recalls the stairway of the Propylæa at Athens, but which unfortunately, does not lead to the divine portico of Mnesicles, are assembled innumerable inquisitive people endeavouring with the aid of glasses and telescopes, to ascertain whether in the distance it is upon a Prussian helmet or rifle that the sun is glittering. For this is the crowning interest that keeps every one breathless,—to catch at least a glimpse of the invisible enemy that has hemmed us in a mysterious circle.

The beacon factory has upon its tower-top a semaphore, the flags of which are even now sending a signal. What mean these bits of vari-coloured bunting that are being run up and down? Is the enemy approaching? Must we hasten to the ramparts? At least we hope that the key to their meaning is not known to Bismarck's spies.

Now we slide by the Île aux Cygnes, shoot under the Pont de Grenelle, and the banks of the river assume a more pastoral appearance. Clumps of trees

alternate with the houses; the stalks of factory chimneys become more frequent; restaurants and wine-shops are seen, with their little gardens divided off into green arbours; numerous flotillas of boats and punts are moored under the banks, and there are to be seen also two or three gunboats, which at once impart seriousness to a landscape that would gladly be a smiling one only.

At last the viaduct of the Point-du-Jour comes in sight, with its elegant super-imposed arcades that bear on their topmost range the belt line of railway. It is a work worthy of the Romans, and that recalls the wondrous Pont du Gard. Nothing could well be more noble, more solid, and yet more light. The breeze blows unimpeded through the broad arches that frame in the hills of Meudon and of Sèvres, those countless lovely spots, beloved of painters and poets, that are forbidden ground to us — but not for long. I shall not speak of the formidable defences that bristle upon the viaduct and its approaches, but even now we may, quoting Shakespeare, say to the Prussians: —

> "Now near enough; your leafy screens throw down,
> And show like those you are."

III

THE PLACE SAINT-PIERRE-MONTMARTRE

OCTOBER, 1870.

THE wonderful blue sky that shone so radiantly upon our gloom has at last had the decency to veil its face; it has done as our women have done: substituted for the bright colours of its dress the gray and black shades that are more appropriate to the serious situation we are in, and lo and behold, we have all taken to regretting the blue heavens. What had seemed to us irony, we now look upon as consolation.

I had planned to watch the departure of the balloon-post, that carries off in its car bundles of those letters written upon thinnest paper, to which, alas! we never get any replies. This very morning a fierce wind was blowing away torn and livid clouds as if they were rags snatched from the lines of the drying-grounds. Weird moanings rose with the whirls of dried leaves switched from the tossing trees, and through the roar of the gale,

the creaking of the vanes, the slamming of doors and shutters, the rolling of carriages hastening homewards, was heard the deep bass of the distant artillery fire. It was just the sort of weather when even a man not given to over indulgence in comfort, is minded to repeat, while snuggling under the blankets, the line of the Latin elegiacal poet: —

Quam juvat immites ventos audire cubantem !

But I had an appointment with a friend who was awaiting me on the Place Saint-Pierre-Montmartre, and so I bravely set out.

Gloomy indeed was that dull and dismal autumn day, which showed the surrounding objects without lighting or shading them. Everything looked dirty, washed out; all trace of colour had vanished, forms were shapeless and looked as if cut out of the flat. The city, tired out by its war night-watch, had not yet risen; along the whole length of the Rue Richelieu there were scarcely two or three cabs to be seen showing black upon the gray paving-stones. Nothing else was visible. Squads of militiamen on their way to their appointed posts, and of National Guards marching to the drill-ground or to the ramparts, alone en-

livened the loneliness of the early morning. Here and there a shop was opening one of its shutters like a heavy eyelid. A very few pedestrians were beginning to move along close by the walls, walking with timid, furtive step as if afraid of the echo they aroused. The impression made upon me was strange and undefinable; I seemed to be in one of those cities of *The Thousand and One Nights* in which all life has been suspended by the spells of a mighty enchanter. But the word that is to break the spell will soon be known and the brilliant bustle will spread abroad again.

On my trip down the Seine I had enjoyed the closing splendours of summer, and now I was on my way to Montmartre amid the sad aspects of autumn.

After climbing the pretty steep streets built upon the slopes of the hill, I at last reached the place where has been pitched the balloonist's camp, and while I was trying to find, with the help of my glasses, the friend who was to secure me admission into the enclosure, I was suddenly surrounded by a patrol of National Guards. My using glasses had awakened suspicion, and I was asked, very politely, I must own, to show my papers. On my exhibiting a pass in proper

form, I was allowed to move about as I pleased. Besides, one of the men had recognised and identified me. I have no fault to find with the vigilance displayed by them, and it is plain that henceforth the Prussians will seek in vain to take us by surprise.

The Place Saint-Pierre-Montmartre slopes somewhat, for it has kept the gradient of the hill on which it is built. On two sides it is surrounded by houses, some of which bear on their dead walls advertisements in those huge letters so dear to the hearts of tradesmen. The third side is formed by the scarp of the hill itself, with its marl, clay, and ochre hues. Sentries are patrolling and crossing on the narrow paths that score the slope of the hill. On the very crest of the height stands a house, and near it rises the Solferino Tower, with the top story cut down for siege purposes, and now surmounted by a semaphore. At the foot, in a corner, are stored away acrobats' caravans that recall the green box in which dwelt Ursus, Gwynplaine, and Dea, while the brave wolf Homo kept watch and ward over them. There is also a merry-go-round, the wooden horses of which are stabled in a shed. These sports and caravans, the homes of freaks, the stands on which the clowns paraded at

suburban fairs to the strains of rag-time music, present a melancholy contrast. The fourth and lowest side of the place is devoted to a market.

In the centre of the square, on a piece of empty ground roped-in, stand three tents: one for the soldiers, the second for the Jack tars, and the third for the aeronauts. A pipe running to the gas main makes a black line across the surface, and with a few planks and empty barrels constitutes the whole of the apparatus. Nothing could well be simpler.

My friend takes me into the enclosure. The white balloon, already filled with gas, and looking like a huge, bossy pearl, of the kind called irregular, flattens and swells under the pressure of the wind, which is still very high. A ring of men, some belonging to the crew, some sailors, some soldiers, some aeronauts, and some living in the neighbourhood, who are helping with their strong arms, are hanging on to the mooring lines and holding to earth the vast globe eager to take flight and shaking the ballast with which it is being heavily loaded. A mechanical engineer, the author of many remarkable discoveries, Mr. F——, and a pigeon fancier with his cage of pigeons, now take their places in the car, in which are already lashed the

bags of letters, newspapers, and despatches. The word "Let go!" is given; the balloon, freed from its bonds, shoots up, sways to and fro, is caught by the wind, and ascends with startling rapidity as if drawn upwards by a whirlwind.

As I watched the white sphere rising and growing smaller in the gray heavens, Victor Hugo's fine lines, so appropriate at the present time, recurred to my mind: —

"Audacity of man! Effort of the prisoner! Sacred wrath! A breaking-out, in fine, that is mightier than the cage! What needs this being, broad-browed atom, to overcome the endless, the boundless, the unfathomable, to master the winds, the storm, the foam, the avalanche? In the heavens but a sheet, on the waves but a board."

Yes, said I to myself, the breaking-out is mightier than the cage; the foe that fancied he had shut us up within a speechless tomb, walled us up within a sepulchre, has been unable to close up our vault with a slab. Our prison has the heavens for a roof, and it is impossible to invest the heavens. The swarming blackness of the invaders cannot corner the blue, and thanks to the balloon, man, freed from his old-time weight,

is winged like the bird. A bold navigator, he starts upon his frail wicker skiff and crosses that ocean bluer even than the other, once the foam of clouds that falls back upon the earth has been passed.

And with the aeronaut go our thoughts also, our good wishes for the beloved absent ones, the outpourings of our hearts, all there is of good, tender, and delicate in human souls. On a piece of thin paper more than one man, who affects to smile stoically, has dropped a tear. Shall we ever again see those to whom we write, now that the letter-box is a balloon and the postman the wind? It depends on the caprices of cannon-balls and the chance of shells. It may be that the beloved head for whom these minute signs have been traced upon paper so thin that a breath would blow it away, has fallen pale and languid upon the pillow from which it will never rise again. And what can be more painful than a letter written to the dead? But away with such gloomy thoughts, and let us trust in a happier fate and a more auspicious future. Did not hope remain at the bottom of Pandora's box for the very purpose of consoling unfortunate humanity?

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Everywhere in the air the intrepid balloons are cross-

ing, soaring higher than the range of the Prussian bullets and laughing at their projectiles. There are Nadar's, Dartois', and Yon's aeroscaphs, Godard's and Wilfrid de Fonvielle's balloons starting from different points and borne by the wind beyond the ring in which we are shut up. They are going to tell the provinces that the heart of Paris beats even yet, and that France, when it storms up to our walls, will find us thin and hungry, no doubt, but alive and resolute, and for the matter of that, she will bring us food; they will tell every one of those we love and from whom we have had to part in this terrible trial, that we do not forget them and that the day of deliverance is drawing nigh.

The balloon had long since vanished, and a fine rain, that penetrated overcoats with its minute drizzle, was beginning to fall. I was taken to the Élysée-Montmartre, both that I might find shelter and that I might see all the details of the making of the balloons in that building, which has been converted into a factory for aerostats. The Élysée-Montmartre is a sort of suburban Mabille, or rather it was, for no one now thinks of dancing. The garden in which it stands is filled with plaster copies of mythological statues painted

in oils, and which shiver in their nudity in the October wind. On wet nights the choregraphic eccentricities of the Bridiais and *grisettes* of the suburbs took place in an immense hall, in which the workshops have been installed.

The walls are ornamented with paintings in distemper representing architectural framework in which are set exotic plants and flowers. Behind the orchestra is a semicircular temple with white pillars, standing out against a background of sombre verdure. The chandeliers are still hanging from the ceiling, their gilding nearly worn off, and with red and green metallic spangle-balls in place of ground glass shades. Dancing-halls are never gay in the daytime, the light of the sun being as injurious to them as to women. But the Élysée-Montmartre, animated as it was with work, presented, in spite of the gloominess of the day, a most interesting and lively appearance.

Some sixty work-girls, most of them young, some of them pretty, and every one dressed with coquettish neatness, were working with their feet the pedals of the sewing-machines that buzzed, so that one might easily have been led into the mistake, just like the old spinning-wheels. O spinning-wheel of Marguerite's, " patient

and dull work," slow labour of the needle, that inspired Thomas Hood with the "Song of the Shirt," how completely you have been distanced by this progressive age. With what dazzling swiftness the steel point used to flash into the stuff and was wont to unite with a hem of the most undeniable regularity the two pieces presented to it! Poor woman's hand, in your less certain work one felt the quiver of life; but nowadays you are counted inapt and cannot struggle against the swift, indefatigable, and accurate machine. Happily the metal sewer needs a handmaiden to cut its work out, for it cannot see what its steel fingers do, and there exists no cog-wheel that can take the place of the brain.

In this same immensely long hall was a ropeworks and a manufactory of netting. Netting plays a most important part in aerostatics. It forms a sort of covering with very wide meshes round the main circumference and lozenge-shaped meshes at the top and the bottom of the balloon, which, when inflated, looks like a huge spinning-top. The utmost care is required in the preparation of the netting, for it has to confine the silk or calico capsule, filled with gas, and to prevent its distending too rapidly or forming pockets or blisters.

In two other rooms that open out into the main hall, and that no doubt were formerly used as bars and refreshment rooms, are cut out on long tables, by the help of patterns made of stout paper, the various pieces which, when put together, form the balloon. They are exactly like slices of cantelope melons or the degrees of longitude on hemispheres.

Having inspected this workshop, Nadar took me to the Northern Railway Station, where the balloons are varnished. How silent and deserted are these splendid spaces, where not long ago all was bustle on the arrival and departure of trains and the wheeling of luggage and parcels. Militiamen are drilling in the yard, the gates to which are closed. It is as impossible to go to Enghien to-day as to Timbuctoo or the sources of the White Nile.

In the waiting-room soldiers and sailors, their shirt-sleeves rolled up, are busy covering with a varnish composed of thick oil, litharge, and india-rubber, the balloon which is to start to-morrow. The gas is always tending to escape from the envelope in which it is contained and to allow the entrance of an equivalent quantity of the atmosphere in which it happens to be, in virtue of the phenomenon called *endosmos* by physi-

cists, which explains the conductivity between cells. In order to dry the varnish, the balloons are inflated by means of an eolipile, with the aid of a wheel fitted with paddles, which, when turned by a handle, drives the air into the interior of the distended sphere. Nadar, Dartois, and Yon have contracted to turn out one balloon a day, and even more if necessary.

At this time everybody has taken to gazing into the heavens; no one thinks of anything but balloons, and people keep watching the wind and investigating the confines of the sky. Crack-brained inventors and experts are equally bent on discovering a way to steer balloons. Victor Hugo, in "The Open Sky," has described his idea of what a dirigible balloon should be, and M. Dupuy de Lôme, the skilful builder of ironclads and monitors, has been sketching in chalk upon the blackboard of the Institute of France his plan of a similar engine.

All this feverish excitement goes to show that we should dearly like to have answers to our letters, and that failing a balloon to bring them, a dove that should arrive with them, written in microscopic characters, under its wing, would be more welcome than was the dove that returned to the Ark with the green bough in

its bill. There is, of course a simpler way of getting at our desire, and that is to drive the Prussians in proper shape beyond their German Rhine, and to get our letters in the good old way through the post. Let us hope that this will be the method adopted.

Then, perhaps, after all these researches, we may light upon the great secret discovered by the sparrow that flies up from the pavement on to the tiles of the roofs. And humanity, that has so long been shouting, "Give me wings! Wings!" as in Rückert's song, will at last be satisfied. Having made itself mistress of the sea and the land, it will seize upon the dominions of the air, for every striving of the soul is bound to be successful.

IV

A TURN ON THE RAMPARTS

OCTOBER, 1870.

THERE is nothing that so thoroughly develops the notion of locomotion as the consciousness that it is impossible to emerge out of a given circle. This is why many a man who was formerly perfectly satisfied to walk from the corner of the Rue Drouot to the corner of the Rue du Helder, and who left to the Mungo Parks of the boulevard the chimerical regions of the Madeleine and the Bastille, now has himself driven to the extreme points of the circumference wherein we are shut up, and gazes with envious eye upon the boundless space that extends beyond the ramparts. Auber himself, the Parisian of Parisians, is hankering to travel. When a balloon is starting one would gladly enough take a seat in the car by the side of the aeronaut, not to escape from the enemy, the Spartan siege broth, and the chances of shells, but simply in order to get

across the bounds, to be free for a brief space, and to soar to the other side of the Prussian lines.

Yielding to this very natural desire, and favoured, besides, by a superb autumnal day, I start with a friend for the landing-stage at the Pont Royal. The little river steamer shortly arrives, gracefully cutting the waters with its prow and crowned with a plume of white smoke, and in our turn we are speedily installed upon the deck, in a snug corner, sheltered from the wind, which, notwithstanding the bright sun, is rather sharp. I have already taken my readers on this little river trip, the longest we may indulge in, and we shall therefore land at once by the Pont Napoléon, where the boats now stop.

The bridge, at once bold and elegant, supports both a railway line and a road: the Belt line and the military road. Within the past few days a second line of rails, intended for the service of the ramparts, has been laid upon the road itself and forms a powerful auxiliary to the defensive works. It has been laid with a rapidity that would astonish the Americans even, quick workers as they are.

The roadway of the bridge is reached by a broad flight of stone steps. The two lines of metals are

divided by a fence of cast-iron plates adorned with a few arabesques. On the parapet that looks towards Charenton bags of earth have been symmetrically ranged, and a fairly large embrasure enables one to look out upon the river, the course of which is barred by three rows of piles, boats laid endwise, and pontoons, the whole guarded by a gunboat. The sky is milky white, and sad-looking in spite of its splendour. The intensity of the light makes objects appear of a sombre hue. As far as the eye can reach the solitude is complete. Numerous factory chimney-stalks rise in this quarter, resembling a forest of granite obelisks, but from one only is there any smoke issuing. On the river, usually so busy, there is not a trace of any boats. At the end of the bridge the rampart, interrupted to allow of the passage of the river, extends its line anew.

Before going farther it may be well to describe somewhat in detail the component parts of the ramparts of a fortified city. Of course everybody knows what they are, but, like Mr. Jourdain, who, when he was asked whether he understood Latin, replied, "Yes, but explain, just as if I did not," more than one of my readers may not object to a short explanation — which does not come from me. The art of

Vauban and Cohorn is unknown to me, and in this respect I am as learned as Jodelet, who was not satisfied with the taking of the half-moon at Arras and insisted that it was a full one. I therefore borrow the following passage from Adolphe Joanne's excellent "Guide to the Environs of Paris":

"The fortifications of Paris are divided into two parts: the *enceinte* and the detached forts. The enceinte is composed of a military street, a rampart, a moat and a glacis. It is provided with bastions. The military street which runs along the whole of the inner side of the enceinte is on the level of the ground. It is sixteen feet four inches wide, with six foot berms, and is macadamised, save in a few places where it is paved. It is planted with trees along its whole length. Next come the earthworks or ramparts, which comprise: 1st, the *terreplein*, which is connected with the road by an inner slope; 2d, the *steps* or *banquettes*, on which in time of siege stand the soldiers who are engaged in firing; 3d, the *parapet*, rising higher than the banquettes and protecting the defenders; it is sixteen feet four inches thick. The wall or revetment of masonry that supports all this earthwork, is covered by an external slope. The *wall*

itself is thirty-two feet eight inches high, and eleven feet six inches thick on an average. It is backed at intervals of sixteen feet by masses of masonry that run for six feet into the earthwork of the parapet. The *scarp* forms one of the sides of the moat, which is forty-nine feet wide, and down the centre of which runs a trench five feet wide, and of similar depth, for the purpose of draining the water, and called the *cunette*. The other side of the ditch is called the *counterscarp*; on the inner side it consists of a slope of earth at a gradient of forty-five degrees. Beyond the moat the ground is so arranged as to cover the masonry work of the scarp, and this outer earthwork is called the *glacis*.

"The enceinte is composed of a series of broken lines with re-entrant and salient angles. The salient angles form what are called *bastions*, and behind are the *curtains*. An ensemble of bastions and curtains is called a *front*. Almost all the fronts of the enceinte of Paris form a straight line. And, in virtue of a well known axiom in fortification, a series of fronts in a straight line is inattackable."

I like that axiom, and I hope the truth of it will ere long be proved. Now let us proceed along the

military street, which was almost deserted in the old days, and which is so full of bustle at the present time.

The rampart which I have just described represents the enceinte in time of peace, when it is not armed for defence, a thing no one ever supposed would become necessary. And poor M. Thiers had to stand a tremendous fire of more or less witty chaff, of projectiles shot through the pea-shooters of the minor press, because he proposed to fortify Paris. Everybody smiled at the thought of seeing an enemy surrounding Paris, so wildly improbable did the notion seem. The Opposition pretended that the sole use of the enceinte would be to shut Paris up, and that the forts would fire upon rioters instead of repelling a chimerical invasion. Besides, it was said, the best rampart for a city is one made of the breasts of brave men; there was Sparta, for instance, that had no ramparts. But, on the other hand, Athens, which was not less brave, had ramparts! And to-day the fortifications that were so ridiculed of yore have proved our salvation.

It is not to be expected that the science of modern defence, which makes use only of straight lines, of salient and re-entrant angles, which sinks as far as pos-

sible its constructions to the level of the ground, should produce the picturesque aspect of the mediæval fortresses, with their round and square towers, their look-outs, their watch-boxes, their pepper-pot turrets, and their pointed roofs: defences that were formidable to look at, and which were invaluable against arrows, mangonels, and catapults, but which could not stand up against artillery. Nevertheless these mathematical lines have a certain grim beauty of their own; their rigorous logic satisfies the eye without the need of the seductiveness of form. There is plainly nothing there but what is necessary, and the set configuration of the useful cannot help having a charm of its own. So I looked with a certain amount of pleasure upon the clean, sharp line of the crest of the rampart that stood out strongly against the luminous whiteness of the sky, upon the slopes of the earth-works, the rows of banquettes upon which the sentries were walking with shouldered arms, at this great ensemble of simple, but unquestionably grand lines, so calmly strong, and I felt the satisfaction which a successful piece of work imparts.

On the outer edge of the parapet are ranged sand-bags, so placed as to leave openings for the chassepots,

on which the sunlight at times sets a spangle of light ere fire breaks out from them. These lighted spaces in the sombre wall produce a very singular and picturesque effect.

At the foot of the slope are built casemates. These are huts, the walls formed of posts, with a roof of heavy beams covered with thick layers of earth that make them bomb-proof. The walls of the huts are themselves protected by a covering of earth and turf, and the general aspect recalls that of a Celtic tumulus, or rather the facsimile of the Roman catacombs that was on view at the Universal Exposition of 1867. They are entered by a narrow semicircular passage, which protects the soldiers inside from the splinters of shells.

The whole of the work has been carried out with the greatest care and method. In the spaces between the casemates are placed barrels, fascines, and sandbags, to shelter the defenders on the ramparts from the bursting shells. At varying distances the guns project their bronze muzzles out of the embrasures. Heavier guns than those on the curtains are mounted on the angles of the bastions, ready to sweep the plain with a cross-fire if, which is most improbable, the enemy should

manage to make his way in between two of the forts.

At certain intervals rise the customs-barracks, solid, grim-looking buildings that harmonise well with the fortifications. Various defensive services are installed in them. Besides the crenelated, loop-holed walls, the epaulements, the palisades, and the chevaux de frise, the gates are provided with drawbridges that are lowered in the morning and raised at night. Paris, of yore so hospitable, is now difficult to approach. Through these gates were re-entering marauders, perhaps poor people who had gone, at the peril of their lives, to reap under the Prussian bullets what is left of their crops. They were laden with bags of potatoes, cabbages, and other vegetables, bits of board, poles and small faggots, — wretched flotsam and jetsam, poor spoil! There were old men and old women, a few young girls and children whose ragged and tattered garments would have made Callot take up his graver, and the equivalent and model of which can be seen in the clever etcher's "The Miseries of War."

Posts of National Guards kept watch and ward upon the rampart, allowing no one to come near and carrying out their prudently rigorous orders. The sentries

marched up and down on the banquette with sloped arms, or remained motionless as statues scanning the horizon. At the foot of the slope squads of men were drilling and learning to handle chassepots or rifles with side breech blocks. Others were playing at chuck-farthing,—a game very much in favour in this time of siege, for it serves to while away innocently the long tedious hours of duty. These improvised soldiers had a firm and assured mien, and it was plain that they meant to do their duty in the hour of danger. None of the songs and shouts of the early days were to be heard, none of the excitement was visible; the mob had been turned into an army, so much could be seen at a glance.

Then, as if to bring back my thoughts to the situation itself, smoke would rise from time to time from Fort Ivry, whirling against the sky, and the roar of the gun came deep and sonorous upon the wings of the wind. It is a shell fired at some Prussian hiding-place.

So far, I have described the rampart merely. Now let us take a look at the other side of the military street, which is just as interesting. The walls of the houses and of the gardens, the latter topped by the

leafless branches of trees yellowed by autumn, are covered with huge posters either printed or stamped. Shelters covered with oil or tarred cloth form a refuge for the National Guards in the event of rain. On great gray cloth tents are the words, — *Official Canteen.* Here and there are stalls of dealers of eatables and drinkables. A girl, young, pretty, and fair, coquettishly attired in a fancy vivandière dress, and wearing a tri-colour scarf round her waist, had drawn numerous customers to her open-air bar. Some distance away a competitor was already trying to diminish the girl's success, but in vain: the rival was dark, and lacked the other's roguish archness.

The new deal boarding of the huts intended for the militiamen contrasted with the gray hues of the old buildings, and here and there a few tents recalled the bivouacs. The blackened traces of smoke showed that the order not to build fires against the garden walls had not been obeyed, and heaps of ashes and half-consumed logs between two paving-stones or two bricks pointed to the sites of improvised kitchens. A fascine factory, a regular siege business, had been set up within a spacious piece of waste ground. Heavily laden waggons were sinking deeper the ruts in the street,

sightseers, women carrying bundles, dealers in drinks and food. I felt somewhat tired, so proceeded to the nearest station on the Belt Line, the Maison-Blanche station. In time of siege, when one is hermetically shut up, it is quite a pleasant sensation to take a railway ticket: one feels as if one were going off; as if one were free.

V

THE BELT LINE

OCTOBER, 1870.

THE Maison-Blanche station is on the level of the Avenue d'Italie, and you have to go down to the railway itself, situated at the bottom of a cutting, by an iron stair covered with an iron roof supported by cast-iron pillars. I had taken an outside seat, on the top of the carriage, so as to enjoy a wider view, and the same notion had occurred to many more, for there were but few passengers in the carriages; on the open-air seats were militiamen, National Guards, bourgeois, idlers, children, and even women who had not been dismayed by the climb, for curiosity stands Eve's daughters in lieu of courage, and they will climb anywhere if there is the least chance of seeing something.

The whole of this part of the Belt Line is constructed with the utmost care. The walls that support the earthworks are built after the fashion of the Cyclopean walls, the stones being laid as the angles happen to fit, and the irregularity contrasting with the dressed ashlar

work that frames in these mosaic panels produces an effect pleasing to the eye. The stairs, the flights of steps leading down, the shelters over the landing-places, present simple but elegant lines. Art is not quite so irreconcilable to industry as is believed.

In many parts the Belt Line runs along fairly deep cuttings, and thus forms within the city itself a moat that might well stop the foe, did he ever manage to get so far. It is a roughly blocked out third line of defence which it is important to complete, and work upon it is being pushed on vigorously. From the top of the carriage I could see above the cutting of the railway line the wheelbarrows rolling along, the shovels rising and falling, the men in their shirt-sleeves coming and going, and epaulements many feet thick rising steadily. General Todleben's precept, "Make earthworks," is being practised with a zeal that would delight the illustrious defender of Sebastopol.

On the other side, beyond the rampart, showed through the light-flushed haze the mass of the château of Bicêtre and the grim profile of the fort that was engaged just then in firing and crowning itself with long jets of reddish smoke illumined by the sun. Looking towards the city, one could see the skinny poplars that

mark the course of the Bièvre, empty spaces, others enclosed with board fences, pieces of leprous walls, tannery sheds, linen hanging on lines, little gardens with autumn flowers, dahlias and sunflowers, that dotted the landscape with red and yellow spots, market gardens with their stretches of cabbages, their beds of lettuce, their long lines of glass shades sparkling in the sun and the panes of the greenhouses that flashed unexpectedly.

Farther off shimmered the pools of the Glacière, where of yore skaters used to resort, in the days when there was no lake in the Bois de Boulogne. On the horizon swelled the dome of the Val-de-Grâce, somewhat stiff and bossy, like all the buildings in the Louis XIII style, and the bolder and more elegant Pantheon showed its dome supported upon a diadem of pillars. On top of a hillock, or fold of the ground, rather, rose in picturesque fashion the ruin of a broken-winged windmill. Hoguet, the painter of windmills, dressed stones and cut-down trees, would have found in it an excellent subject for a water-colour.

At times the abrupt obscurity of a tunnel, rendered necessary by the passing under a line of railway on a higher level, or by too great a difference in the gradients, put out the landscape, just as if it had been a

stage scene when the gas is turned low for a night effect, and then the view suddenly reappeared in a blaze of dazzling light.

We soon passed Gentilly, and went under the Parc de Montsouris, which, before the limits of the city were pushed back to the line of the fortifications, was right in the suburbs, had not the honour of being a park, and provided Louis Cabat with the subject of one of his prettiest pictures, "The Montsouris Tavern," which was worthy of forming the companion piece to another painting by the same artist, "The Old Beaujon Garden," a reminiscence of a Paris site that has ceased to exist, and which is to be seen in this little picture only. How many charming spots have disappeared in just the same way since I was a child!

It does not take the engine more than a few minutes to slide past the Montrouge and Vaugirard stations. The line no longer runs at the bottom of a cutting, for the ground sinks as the Seine is approached and the metals are laid upon embankments that enable one to see a long way. The view includes the forts of Vanves and Issy, the Val Fleury, spanned by the Versailles railway (left bank), on a viaduct with two superimposed rows of arches, through which one can see the

heavens, the trees, and the slopes of the hills; the wood of Lower Meudon showing yellow, gilded by the early autumn breezes, but extremely sweet in tone and seen as through a silvery haze. The whole of the horizon, indeed, was bathed in a white luminousness that blurred the contours, yet there was no mist, rather a sort of luminous dust, and Nature that day seemed to have been painted with Corot's brush.

As if to recall to the feeling of reality the minds which this magnificent spectacle might well induce to reverie, loud reports, that did not come from the forts, were heard close by. The train slowed down as it entered upon the Point-du-Jour Viaduct that connects the two banks of the Seine. From the top of this coign of vantage, a wondrous panorama was unrolled before me. On the one hand, Paris, with its distant domes, towers, and steeples, and in the foreground the waters of the river glazed with shimmering pearly gray. On the other, the softly swelling hills of Meudon, Bellevue, and Sèvres, velvety with bluish verdure, charming resorts, frequented in days that are no more by couples of lovers who inspired Victor Hugo with the lovely line:

"Now when I say Meudon, think of Tivoli," —

and which are now receptacles for the Prussians, who hide under their shade like beasts of prey. It is there that are our foes, invisible in the daytime and prowling forth at night at the time when wild beasts leave their dens. No wisp of smoke, no glint of bayonet, no motion of any sort betrays their presence. The land looks absolutely deserted, and one has to think twice to make sure that Paris is invested. But it is a deceitful calm, for in the shelter of the woods which the autumn sap alone prevented being burned down, they are digging like moles, and repair with blind tenacity the intrenchments which the shells of Mont-Valérien and the guns of the gunboat "Farcy" destroy every morning.

The river was deserted; there was nothing to be seen on it but an ironclad gunboat off the end of the Île Saint-Germain, and the three black lines formed by the booms of the defence. On the right and the left, far down below, for the railway runs upon the topmost story of the viaduct, which is very high, stretched the quays, bristling with obstacles which it is not desirable to describe.

While we were on top of the viaduct, the batteries at Auteuil and the Point-du-Jour threw a number of

shells of heavy calibre, the tremendous report being increased by the echoes of the arches. It was the first time I had heard the ramparts speak out; they talk loud and in a dialogue with the enemy would make themselves heard.

If, contrary to their habit, the Prussians should take it into their heads to return these shots, what a splendid objective — I must be permitted to make use for once of this now fashionable expression, which imparts such an æsthetic look to warfare — the line of carriages, halted on the bridge, and standing out plainly against the sky, would be for them! And what a terrific tumble would our dismembered bodies take from the top of this crest into the depths of the Seine! I have no doubt the same thought occurred to a number of my fellow-travellers, for laughter was hushed, talk ceased and everybody looked grave. It was with secret relief that we all felt the train starting again.

Ronsard's elegy on the destroyed forest recurred to my mind as I beheld the poor Bois de Boulogne, the trees of which, cut down into the shape of whistles a few feet above the ground, form a harrow of sharp stakes on which men and horses alike would come to

grief. A tree cut down is a sadder sight than a ruined house even, for money alone is needed to restore the latter, but to make the other grow again needs the slow collaboration of nature, which never hurries, for it has all eternity to work in, and laughs at ephemeral man's fretfulness. Paris, which hesitates at no sacrifice, has remorselessly cut off her own fair green hair, in order to be the better prepared for the enemy and to give him less hold upon her.

As we passed along the rampart, my gaze plunged into bright villas, cosy retreats of happy life, which have preserved their marble fountains, their flower-beds, their clumps of rare trees, their vases, and their statues. On the side of the Avenue Ulrich, I see the American ambulance installed under tents, this having been ascertained, during the long War of Secession, to be preferable to any other system. Who would have thought, three months ago, that the flag of the International Society would be flying in the Bois de Boulogne sheltering the wounded?

Evening was falling, cold violet tones were spreading over the heavens, objects were becoming blurred and assuming confused shapes, so I had to postpone to another day the completion of my excursion. When

that day did come it proved, unfortunately, one on which the wind was driving great clouds full of rain, and blowing fiercely upon the city, sending tiles and slates flying round like dead leaves; but I am an old campaigner, I have seen many a storm, and I make it a point never to trouble about the thermometer, the eternal preoccupation of the Philistine. So off I went in weather "not fit for a poet."

We first travel back as far as Courcelles, where the line to Auteuil runs into the Belt Line. This part of the road is as interesting as the first, skirting as it does the inside of the rampart which is picturesquely animated. Casemates, armoured guard-houses, shelters formed of posts supporting thick boards, rows of barrels filled with water or sand, hedges of fascines, sandbags set in order upon the parapet for the purpose of protecting the sentries, and defensive works of all kinds are here in infinite numbers. The walls of the gardens and enclosures are crenelated and loopholed; the approaches to the stations bristle with palisades, and barricades, built of paving stones, beams, and trunks of trees, stop the way in every direction, and where the ground between them is open, they are connected by a hollow way.

Whatever the genius of desperate defence can invent is to be found here. I cannot say whether we shall ever get out of Paris, but it is sure that no one will get in. It is a maze of earthworks, epaulements, moats, scarps, and counterscarps, pits, caltrops, chevaux de frise, and other unpleasant surprises. Not an inch of ground could be won without fighting for it. The National Guards, the militiamen, the francs-tireurs, keep watch and ward until the assault takes place; their good temper is unimpaired by the wind, the rain, and the mud, the latter of which clothes them in yellow gaiters. They come, go, and drill; they light, to cook their soup, a fire which the north wind blows up for them; they smoke their pipes; they take a drink of brandy at the canteen, and care not a whit for the drops of water which the storm dashes in their faces.

Beyond the rampart I could see in the country a two-storied tower surmounted with a semaphore, the hill of Sannois, easily known by its ochre-coloured scarp, and the more distant slopes of Montmorency showing blue in the background. Then, turning citywards, a prospect of great courts, of vast enclosures attached to decrepit houses, a patchwork of pieces and bits like Harlequin's coat. These were hybrid warehouses

where comes ashore the wreckage of buildings pulled down, a sort of architectural temple or *Rastro*. There were piles of doors, of jalousies, of awnings, of sashes still provided with panes, of stair frames, of panels torn away in pieces, of shop-fronts, of stalls, of floorings, of boards, of beams, enough to build a fairly large town without the help of carpenters, masons, joiners, and locksmiths. In other yards tipped up carts lifted their shafts to heaven as if begging for work. Clothes were hanging out to dry from every window; in the empty spaces all manner of family businesses were being transacted, and hens were picking up seed as freely as if they were in the country. In this part Paris has preserved its former faubourg and suburban aspect, which the new town will have none of and which nevertheless has picturesque touches.

We were in sight of Montmartre, the dark outline of which stood out grim against the stormy sky. The foreground consisted of the domes of the gasworks reservoirs, the tops of which were sinking lower and lower, and inky black factory chimney stalks. Bluish smoke lay between the foreground and the middle distance, and increased the aerial perspective of the picture. On the slope of the hill, which was of a

lighter tone than the rest, could be made out the battery of guns that is to get the better of all Krupp's cast steel, the two windmills, the only survivors of the winged and gesticulating band that Don Quixote of la Mancha would have charged, the Solferino Tower and its signalling apparatus, and a few houses the severe lines of which did not jar with the general outline. The whole hill was of the tone called neutral tint by water-colour painters, the scale of which goes from blue-black to violet gray.

Banks of clouds, tumbling and falling, resembling the débris of a ruined Cyclopean city, allowed rays of livid light to filter between their disjointed masses, which the storm wind from time to time made brighter. It was grandly beautiful, like the Englishman Martin's biblical pictures of Nineveh or Babylon.

The lower streets are filled with works, factories, and docks, with high brick walls, and pulleys hanging from the attic windows, signs of a great industrial activity interrupted by the war. Such of the streets as open on the rampart have at one end skilfully constructed barricades, impregnable as fortresses. Here is the Ourcq Canal, chock full of crafts of all builds that have sought a refuge within its basins, and the

presence of that flotilla with tarry masts, and painted in bright colours, lends a most pleasant Dutch look to this part of the picture. Then here is Pantin, crowned by a modern Gothic church, with a double spire, that is most charmingly and picturesquely effective; but I have scarcely time to glance at it, for the line sinks between two slopes covered with artificial rock-work and pines placed there by M. Alphand, and soon is swallowed up by an endless tunnel that passes under the park of the Buttes-Chaumont. We emerge from the tunnel for an instant, and then a second, somewhat less long, takes us under Père-Lachaise, under the graves of the dead; the water that drips from the vaulting has filtered through their bones, and the thought fills me with secret horror. On turning around, at the exit of the tunnel, the City of the Dead, with its white dwellings proportioned to the stature of the Manes, is seen on the slope of the hill with a background of sombre verdure.

The pillars of the former Barrière du Trône soon appear, surmounted with their glorious Stylites: Philip Augustus and Saint Louis. Saint-Mandé shows us its pretty bourgeois houses with their little bits of gardens in front; Vincennes its wood, topped by its donjon,

VI

AT THE THÉÂTRE-FRANÇAIS

NOVEMBER, 1870.

THE last poster of the Théâtre-Français, a few rain-washed rags of which are still to be seen on the kiosks, bears date September 5. Ponsard's "The Lion in Love" was being given that day. There has been much discussion of the question whether it was not outraging public feeling to reopen the theatres during the period of deep sorrow. Sound arguments were brought forward on both sides, and I have no intention of reviving a debate which is now wholly uncalled for. A few theatres opened their doors for charity purposes and for afternoon performances interspersed with lectures and intermedes, and passages from the works of the masters have been recited by actors in every-day dress. The deep and mysterious strains of the orchestras of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and Weber are heard once again. And why should they not be? Music has the gift of soothing pain; it is possessed of inarticulate

its Mirabeau Tower, and the minarets, ending in crescents, of its Sainte-Chapelle. Bercy station is but seven or eight minutes away, and our trip is finished. The gale has fallen; the rain has ceased; and ragged clouds, which the sunset stripes with rose, are floating in a sky which has just that greenish Egyptian ash or sickly turquoise look that one sees between the white colonnades in Paolo Veronese's banqueting scenes.

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consolation, of faint moans, of delicate, feminine caresses that do not offend the broken-hearted, and amid its sighs hope seems to whisper, and at times heroic calls to resound. It is no wonder that the crowd at the Pasdeloup concerts was tremendous, and that there was not a seat to be had at the Théâtre-Français on the occasion of the performance for the benefit of the heroic city of Châteaudun, and, the day after, at that for the benefit of the sufferers by the war.

Yes, it is quite true; the flag of the International Society, with its cross gules on a field argent, does fly from the top of the theatre and from the balcony on which we stepped to get a breath of fresh air between the acts. Wounded men are lying in the foyer which of yore was traversed by critics who at times were so deeply taken up with art discussions that they forgot the play. Strange indeed, at the first glance, is this commingling of the ambulance and the playhouse, but we are living in days when startling contrasts are frequent. Events bring up antitheses of the strangest, and so boldly as to upset all rhetoric. People are already accustomed to this, and it seems the most natural thing in the world.

It was reported that the scenery and costumes having been safely stowed away in a cellar or a protected

warehouse, bomb-proof, the tragedy would be performed in every-day dress between the posts of the stage and without any setting. I rather liked the notion; for tragedy, as understood by the great masters of the seventeenth century, had no pretensions to local colour, knowing neither the thing nor the name for it. Profound Hellenist though Racine was, he certainly did not bethink himself, when about to have "Andromache" or "Iphigenia" performed, of looking at a Greek vase, or of studying a medal of antiquity in order to have the stage-setting more accurate. The analysis of passion, in dialogue, with an undefined architectural background resembling the shadowy tints that fill up the backgrounds of portraits, has no need of accurate costuming, and tragedy, which used to be performed in periwig, kilt, and hooped skirts, might just as well be performed in a frock-coat. Well, I was disappointed. Tragedy had managed to find in some cupboard of the costume room its entire splendid wardrobe: chlamys, peplums, tunics, mantles, cothurns, and even a set of scenery that was rather too Pompeian for the palace of Buthrotes, the scene of the play. But that is not the fault of the siege.

I need not, I fancy, analyse "Andromache," and

add a few æsthetic discussions on Racine. Both the author and his play are well known. But how beautiful and touching was Mlle. Favart in the part of Andromache, which seems to have been written for her! And how admirably the poet has managed, without in the least deforming the pure antique contour of that noble figure, to add to it a delicacy, a chastity, and a nobility of character that heighten its charm!

"In Euripides, Andromache trembles for the life of Molossus, a son she has borne to Pyrrhus, and whom Hermione seeks to have put to death along with his mother, but here there is no question of Molossus. Andromache knows no other husband than Hector, no other son than Astyanax. I believed that in taking this view I was conforming to that we take nowadays of that princess. Most people who have heard of Andromache have heard of her only as the widow of Hector and the mother of Astyanax. It is not thought that she ought to love any other husband or any other son, and I doubt whether her tears would have produced upon the spectators the impression they did, had they been flowing for another son than the one she had borne to Hector."

These lines, so full of finesse and feeling, were written by Racine, and prove that the illustrious poet was also a most tactful critic. The public is a jealous lover that admits of no infidelity in the ideal figures that are presented to it. The widow of Hector sharing the bed of Pyrrhus, as she was bound to do, being his captive, would not have excited its interest.

The auditorium of a theatre always looks strange and gloomy when the sun is shining outside. The daylight finding its way in through some interstice and mingling with the light of gas produces curious effects. Every one knows that the true life of the theatre is nocturnal; the day forgets its hard labours in intellectual pleasure, but it is surprised at being called upon to interrupt its task for a performance that usually occurs at night only.

In times of siege one must be economical if one is to hold out. Man lives not on bread alone, but on light also; gas is stored up sunshine, and under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, its beams have to be carefully doled out. Consequently the hall was half lighted only and the jets were turned half down, forming a penumbra favourable to the stage and

the actors, whose importance was augmented by the semi-darkness in which the spectators were plunged; and, besides, we had come to see and not to be seen. There were comparatively few ladies, and their quiet dresses, black or gray, did not call for bright lighting. Most of the men had not taken the trouble to change their National Guards tunics; hats were scarce and képis numerous. The truth is the place did look a little too much like a camp.

In the large stage-box, which was formerly the Imperial box, sat the convalescent wounded from the ambulance, and all eyes were turned towards them with emotion. There were men with their arms in slings, others with hands or heads bandaged up; but the one who attracted most attention was a young fellow with a broad bandage across his face; he looked like one of the Sahara Touaregs who veil their faces up to the eyes like women. A bullet, which, it was said, it had been impossible hitherto to extract, had lodged in one of the nostrils; but this did not prevent his watching most attentively Andromache's tears and Hermione's fits of anger. Every one of these brave fellows, scarcely risen from their bed of pain, seemed to enjoy the change, and those who still had two hands

applauded at the right places with that simplicity of feeling that is never mistaken.

Between the tragedy and the comedy that day was also performed "A Physician in Spite of Himself." Coquelin read a poem by Henri de Bornier, about Châteaudun, the heroic little town. The poem had a fine lyrical rush about it and was warmly received by an enthusiastically sympathetic audience. He next recited Bergeret's "Cuirassiers of Reichshoffen," — a poem which has swing, boldness, and a certain epic grandeur, and in which the difficulty of clothing modern details in lyrical forms has been most happily overcome. The charge of the cuirassiers in the moonlight, followed by their long shadows galloping behind them, as if the living about to die already had their spectres behind them, recalls, without imitating it, the fantastic effect of Zeidlitz's "Nocturnal Review," which Raffet illustrated so marvellously well.

Sganarelle, improvised into a physician by being thrashed, and played by Got in the funniest possible way, compelled a whole audience to laugh, little as it wanted to, but Molière's fun is irresistible.

On coming out one feels quite surprised to see the light of day and the people going about their business;

unwittingly one staggers for a moment like a night-bird passing from the darkness to daylight.

This performance was followed by another, and it was so successful that the sale of seats had to be stopped; and had not the manager offered me a seat in the lower box called the "Tomb," I should have been compelled to continue to perambulate the arcades of the Palais-Royal. In the box I was much like Don Carlos in the cupboard: —

"I choked right thoroughly, and heard right badly."

I therefore accepted Édouard Thierry's proposal to take a turn round the foyer, that is, round the ambulance, for it is in this splendid, thoroughly aired, high-ceiled hall, which combines every requisite element of healthfulness, that the ambulance has been installed. The monumental chimney-place, in front of which so many discussions have taken place, sends out heat from huge logs and keeps up a pleasant temperature. The beds of the wounded are ranged head to wall on either side of the hall, leaving a broad space between the two rows. The busts of the comic and the tragic poets gaze upon them with their white eyes and seem to watch over them. Houdon's Voltaire still sneers upon

its marble arm-chair; the Patriarch of Ferney has not been veiled; but a band of green percaline protects the pedestal and runs round the walls, breast high, to guard against blows and scratches.

It is needless to say that the beds are scrupulously clean and dazzlingly white. There are others in the long gallery in which people stroll, and the windows of which open out on the Rue Richelieu. On the end bed was placed, no doubt in the room of the dead man who had just been taken away, and as if to sanctify the worldliness of the place, a great black crucifix with its pale yellow, ivory corpse with the arms painfully outspread. When I visited the room there were but two wounded men in bed, the one in the foyer, the other in the gallery, and both smiled in return to my respectful salute. The house surgeons and nurses occupy the small buffet room at the end of the passage. In the linen room, situated on the floor below, I came upon the lovely Delphine Marquet, busy rolling up bandages. With her little ringlets curling on her forehead, her quiet black dress, and her plain linen cuffs and collar, she looked like one of the ladies of the days of Louis XIII., who are to be seen in Abraham Bosse's pictures visiting the sick. But

there was no gallant with soft, long-plumed beaver, puffed out shirt, flaring boot-tops filled with lace, standing near her, hand on hip and twisting his moustache. The actress, serious and engrossed in her charitable work, was toiling in solitude.

We also visited the kitchens, installed on the ground-floor. When the lovely actresses on duty go down into it to fetch a bouillon or to prepare a dainty dish for one of the convalescents, the lighted hall resembles that famous painting by Murillo known as "The Angels' Kitchen."

On our way through the passage that leads from the hall to the stage, we met a couple of Sisters; two Sisters of the order of Hospitallers, and the one was asking the other: "Where is Sister Saint Magdalen?" "At the Palais-Royal Theatre," answered the other in the most natural manner.

At the very moment these Sisters were passing, Basile, wearing the long, black robe, white bands, and queer hat still worn by Spanish priests, was coming out from the green-room. He drew back against the wall and bowed most respectfully. An act of the "Marriage of Figaro" was just then being performed. It was a mere coincidence, of course, but if an author

were to permit himself such a contrast, he would be charged with indulging in unlikelihood. And what a strange series of startling events it is that has led to Beaumarchais' Basile rubbing elbows with real nuns in one of the passages of the Comédie-Française! Béranger's song, "The Actress and the Sister of Mercy," came back to me; but in this case the reality is more striking than the fiction, for it is not in the next world, as in the song, that this meeting has occurred. The relations between the actresses and the nuns are marked by the utmost propriety and decency; the artists of the Comédie-Française are really well-bred women, and they venerate the holy women as these so well deserve to be venerated.

To the selections from "Tartuffe," the "Marriage of Figaro" and "The Litigants," was added the attraction of the recitation of poems. Mme. Victoria Lafontaine recited in an exquisitely charming personal way a delightful little poem by Théodore de Banville, in which is described the evening at home of a National Guardsman who has returned from the ramparts after twenty-four hours spent on patrol and sentry duty in rain and cold wind, and who finds, to his joy, on returning to his house, all the sweet harmonies of the

home: his wife, his child, his comfortable arm-chair, his slippers warmed for him, and the loving talk under the opaline light of the lamp, pure family pleasures to which one is brought back by the seriousness of the situation and which prove far superior to the frivolous enjoyment afforded by the club, the card-room, and the wings of the theatre. Mlle. Agar gave, with incomparable power, Auguste Barbier's "The Brazen Lyre," and Mlle. Favart, dressed in a lovely white gown, satiny and fluffy like the plumage of a dove, cooed in a voice sweeter than the most suave music a poem by Eugène Manuel; a charming piece which bears the title, "The Pigeons of the Republic." The birds dear to Venus are no longer employed in carrying love messages; Cupid no longer hides under their wing the little folded note the seal of which is the lover's kiss. Now they are asked for news of France; they are questioned as to the movements of the armies; they have become official carriers and are enrolled in the great war host.

That very morning I had been reading "The Wasps" of Aristophanes, and it did not seem to me that I was bound to stay to hear the act from "The Litigants" that formed the closing number of the

entertainment. But I did not know how to get out of the place, and I could not possibly have quoted just then the famous line: —

"Brought up within the palace, I know its every turn."

I had quite lost my way; corridors, stairs, and passages had been partitioned off in order to separate the ambulance from the theatre, and I had to ask my way of a Sister who very kindly set me in the right path and accompanied me to the outer door. Is it not a sign of the times, to use the expression employed by some newspapers, to see a critic guided through the mazes of the Théâtre-Français by a Hospitaller nursing Sister for an Ariadne?

VII

THE DESERTED HOUSE

NOVEMBER, 1870.

PECULIARLY sad is the position of the inhabitants of the suburbs whom the war has compelled to take refuge in Paris with bundles hastily packed and so much of their furniture as they could manage to carry away. They have settled as well as they could in the first place they came upon, amid the wreckage of their former comfort, finding it difficult to move about in the mess of things that are all out of place. The chariot that had to flee before the invasion of the barbarians has been discharged precipitately, higgledy-piggledy, without care, and the setting in order of the chaos has been postponed from week to week, for prompt deliverance has been daily looked for. All the tenuous threads with which habit, that second nature, binds a man to a city, to a quarter, to a house, nay, to less, to the corner of a room, to an arm-chair turned in a particular way, all have been suddenly snapped.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

Engrossed at first by the succession of disasters, the anger evoked by defeat, the feverish eagerness of the defence, the breaking of these fibres, the roots of which plunge so deep in the heart, has not been felt at the outset. But day follows day with alternations of hope and despair; life resumes little by little its normal course, and gradually one learns to feel amid the general woe one's own particular sorrow. The soul hurts and no longer fits rightly in the body; something is lacking and one looks for it in uncertainty; undefinable melancholy oppresses, strange discomfort disturbs: it is the old habits returning and whispering in one's ear the well-known words, the familiar expressions of old. They clasp one in their supple arms, and with bent head wet one's shoulder with hot tears; they bring with them Remembrance and Nostalgia, two gloomy figures draped in gray.

It is in the morning that this feeling comes over you, when, on opening your eyes, you see reflected in the spotless mirror on the mantelpiece, not the familiar landscape you perceived from your bed, the clumps of trees uprising from the wildering garden and the row of poplars standing out against the heavens, but the corners of roofs, dormer windows, a forest of chimney-

pots, plaster, earthenware, or sheet-iron, stayed with iron bars, topped with queer hoods and capitals that disgorge smoke into the fog, an ocean of tiles and slates, brown, green, and blackened, streaked by the rain, on which pale Dawn steps with lifted foot like a roofer. Your cat, terrified by the removal, keeps close under some piece of furniture and does not come to wish you good morning as he used to do every day. You stretch out your hand, but you fail to find your Homer or your Shakespeare in its customary place. The white form that, with hair carelessly tied, and resembling in her long robe the angels in missals, used to appear on the threshold of the door and say: "Good-morning, papa," no longer comes beaming in upon you. She is far, far away, thank God! by the lake side, safe from the savage hordes. The postman brings no letters; and all these trifles make your heart bleed internally; the old wounds re-open and a sadness like unto death seizes upon you.

Every one of the refugees, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, experiences this in a greater or less degree, and every one, even if the spot be a dangerous one, and he runs the risk of being shot by a Prussian bullet, goes to see the house, the villa, the hut, the shop or

the lodging he has been compelled to abandon, even if he is going to find the place devastated, torn up by shells, crenelated and loopholed. You feel that you must at any cost see once more the little garden, the well on which the hop-vine and the Virginia creeper used to grow, the cabbage bed, the sunflowers balancing their disks above the rows of vegetables, and all that poor picturesqueness of the suburbs that strikes the humble in heart more, mayhap, than the grander aspects of nature.

Such a desire seized upon me the other day with the irresistible intensity of sickness. I could neither read nor write; my pen stopped in the middle of a line awaiting the guidance of the mind, but my mind was elsewhere. Yet I had sworn I would not go out of the city before we were triumphant and the foe had been driven away. Nevertheless, I had to give in and to own myself perjured. I could not keep away: and so off I went with the companion that habitually accompanies me on my expeditions.

As we passed by the Arc de Triomphe, I noticed that the *bassi-relievi* on both façades had at last been boarded over. At first it had been intended to protect Rude's masterpiece, "The Departure of the Volun-

teers," and Cortot's group, though, as they face Paris, they are less exposed. It is a wise precaution, on the whole, though heroic sculpture would look none the worse for a cicatrice inflicted by a round shot or a shell.

In front of that solemn pylone, on the side which ends the Avenue de la Grande-Armée, there is always a crowd of people, a sort of open-air club, in which the news of the day is discussed, and where information, both erroneous and correct, is passed from mouth to mouth. It is possible to see there how legends are formed, and how the popular imagination adds, with the utmost good faith, to the actual fact just what it needs to become poetical. There, out of diverse accounts, enlarged or combined, is gradually composed the *Romancero* of the rampart. The exploits of the militiamen and the francs-tireurs related by popular rhapsodies, recall the feats of Chingachgook and Hawk-Eye in pursuit of the Mingoes.

Carefully constructed barricades block the road two or three times between the Arc de Triomphe and the barrier, but so far the aspect of the place is not much changed. But once the drawbridge on the rampart and the defences concentrated at that point have been

crossed, you feel as if you had been transported into a strange locality, so completely has the appearance of the place been altered. The military zone of the fortifications, entirely razed and demolished, presents wholly new prospects. On the right, as you go out, on the Chemin de la Révolte, is seen the commemorative chapel erected on the spot where the Duke of Orleans died. No doubt it has been spared on the ground that it is a national monument, and, besides, its shape, low and nearly that of a tomb, did not imperatively call for its destruction. It contained magnificent stained glass windows from cartoons by Ingres; these have had to be stored away for safety. On the other side, Gellé's works, notable for their tall rose-coloured brick chimney shaft and the suave odour of perfumery they spread abroad, have been demolished, and the neighbouring houses have shared the same fate as far as the road to the Porte Maillot.

This pulling down has brought out plainly the façade of the Restaurant Gillet. There are no more wedding breakfasts held there, the banquets are over, and you no longer see, on your way back from the Bois, a couple descend from a carriage and slip quickly up the private rooms stairs to enjoy a quiet dinner.

The kitcheners, that used to be always ablaze, are out now. But in front of the main entrance there is as much bustle as ever, for General Ducrot has established his headquarters at Gillet's, and there is an incessant coming and going of orderlies, horsemen, soldiers, and people coming to ask for passes, for without a pass no one may proceed beyond the Neuilly bridge.

When on my way to my house in the Rue de Longchamps, I often used to go down the Avenue Maillot, which skirts the Bois de Boulogne, from which it is separated by a fairly deep ha-ha fence. In ordinary times it is a very pleasant walk; on the one hand is the Bois and on the other a row of pretty houses with gardens in front. The road is bordered with horse-chestnuts, but of these I shall speak presently.

On turning the corner of the restaurant a prospect wholly new to me suddenly opened up and filled me with the liveliest surprise. A vast range of ground stretched as far as the eye could see, bristling all over with stumps that looked like broken columns. It was quite like an Eastern cemetery, where the place of each tomb is marked by a marble post, and, bar the giant cypresses, it was the exact reproduction of the Field of the Dead at Eyoub and Scutari. Yet we were

at the Porte Maillot and not in Constantinople, but faint wisps of blue smoke and light trailing mists upon the face of the land and blown about by the breeze increased the illusion. The columns were the stumps of the trees of the poor Bois de Boulogne, cut down to three feet from the ground, and not Turkish tombs at all. This wide-spread cutting-down had revealed buildings usually concealed by the trees and which now showed like erratic blocks on the denuded plain. It was painfully desolate, yet with a beauty of its own, and the stern prospect would have delighted a painter.

The axe of the woodman was still at work, and here and there a tree would fall with a dull groan; nor would I swear that it was always a sacrifice to strategy or that the woodcutter was in every case carrying out the orders of the military engineers. Wizened old women, more hideous than Panzoust's Sibyl, and who looked scarcely able to crawl, kept passing by laden down with huge bundles of wood, the branches covering their backs like a carapace and making them resemble tortoises standing on their hind legs. There was a little girl some thirteen or fourteen years of age trotting along with the stump of a tree, four or five feet long, upon her shoulder. But there are all sorts of faggots,

as Sganarelle remarks, and siege faggots are particularly large.

The mansions, villas, and cottages in the Elizabethan, Renaissance, or Dutch style, that border the Avenue Maillot, and which are nearly all deserted, are used as quarters by the militiamen, as we could tell by the trousers and shirts hanging from the windows. Among all these beautiful houses there was one that I used to like better than any, and in which I loved to imagine scenes of happiness. It seemed to me that one was bound to be happy in that palazzino sheltered by its mantle of English ivy. I used to admire, through an opening in the foliage, its white stone pillars, its well-kept outer steps, the happy mingling of coloured bricks, the balcony overflowing with flowers, the blinds, adorned with painted birds, always discreetly closed. The house was still there, but its expression had changed; it now looked sad and weary.

We were compelled to leave the Avenue Maillot, which was obstructed with barricades that grew more formidable the nearer we drew to the Avenue de Madrid, and we reached the Rue de Longchamps by almost deserted side streets in which militiamen were coming and going, and artillerymen were cooking

their rations upon fires made of brush and bits of wood picked up on the open ground. The barking of a few dogs startled by our passage alone broke the silence. From time to time was heard the sound of a shot fired at a sparrow, and in the distance sounded the rolling of the drums in a drum-school.

At last we came to my house, though I did not know whether I should find even a trace of it. Externally there was nothing changed. The head of the Victory of the Parthenon, the marble original of which was brought from Athens by Laborde, and a plaster cast of which stands in a circular niche, with red background, in my study, was still in its place, the glorious sister of the Venus of Milo, a superb force of form, *vis superba formæ*, an immortal ideal of beauty, the tutelary deity of my home. There was a window standing open, just as if the house still held its former inhabitants, and this struck me as a good omen. I rang the bell, and the gardener opened the gate. We entered, I with swelling heart, into the dwelling that was as small as Socrates', and which I had so easily filled with friends.

When I enter a house that has long stood empty, I have always the feeling that I am disturbing somebody,

and that during my absence invisible guests have settled down in the place and are now retreating before me. I seem to see the flutter of their dresses on the threshold of the doors as I open them. Solitude and loneliness combine to produce a mystery which my entrance breaks in upon. On seeing me, the spirits cease whispering, the spider stops weaving its web, the silence becomes deep, and my steps sound with hollow echo in the empty rooms.

No damage had been done; indeed, no one had entered the place since I had left it; the poet's modest abode had been respected. On the mantelpiece in my room a volume of Alfred de Musset had remained open at the very page I had last been reading; on the wall hung the copy of a head by Ricard, which had been begun by my dear daughter, now, alas! so far away, and who will not read this article. A bottle of scent, uncorked, was evaporating upon her white marble dressing-table, and spreading its faint, sweet perfume in her little maiden's chamber.

I went up to my study, which I had been busy arranging for the purpose of carrying out some considerable work that perchance will never be completed. All that remained to be done was to put up the wall-

hangings, and I thought of the solemn aphorism evolved by Oriental wisdom: "When the house is completed, Death steps in." Yes, death, or else disaster. I was filled with deep melancholy as I gazed upon the place where I have loved and suffered, where I have borne with life as it comes, mingled with weal and woe, with more woe than weal, where I have passed days that shall come back no more, and where visited so many dear ones that have started for that bourne whence no traveller returns. There, in my humble way, I felt something akin to Olympio's sadness.

It was getting late, and the gates of Paris are closed at five o'clock now. But before leaving my beloved home I went for a turn in the garden. The evening mists were beginning to rise and formed a bluish haze at the end of the walks. The wind was rustling the wet leaves, and the bare trees were shivering and trembling as if they felt chilled. A few dahlias were fading in the flower-beds, and an old yellow-legged blackbird, well known to me, shot up abruptly at my feet with a flapping of wings that seemed intended for a salute. A couple of tremendous reports — the "good-night" of Mont Valérien to the Prussian redoubts, — did not

appear to scare the bird, which had doubtless grown used to the row.

That same bird nests every spring in the old ivy that casts its green mantle upon the wall, and whistles mockingly as it flies by my window, just as if it could read what I am writing.

VIII

SHORT SKETCHES

NOVEMBER, 1870.

WHEN painters go out for a stroll they are in the habit of carrying in their pockets a small sketch-book on which they jot down notes. A painter's notes consist of a few rapid strokes of the pencil that reproduce a gesture, an attitude, a look, the main line of a figure or the silhouette of an object. These hieroglyphs are most significant and interesting to those who know how to read them. Although to the eye of the ordinary man they look like confused scribblings, there can always be made out in them the characteristic trait, the touch of nature, the unconscious truthfulness of gesture taken in the very act, and that bit of the unforeseen which is not always attained in artistic combinations. Though the poet, or, if such a title appear too ambitious, the writer, when he is idling along the streets and through squares, does not make sketches on a sketch-book, he has methods of his own by means of which he fixes the con-

tours of things, and which enable him, if he fears that the light pencilling will rub off, to ink it over. He thus carries in his memory, as in a portfolio, a great number of drawings, mostly unfinished, but containing indications sufficient to allow of their being completed at leisure, if the need arise or if caprice urges. They consist of faces noted as they passed, of groups of which a glimpse has been caught, of a striking detail, of a prospect that has opened up suddenly, of a small fact unseen by the crowd, but which strikes the dreamer.

In all this there is no definite subject, no composition making up a picture and lending itself easily to framing, yet among these sketches more than one face successfully hit off, more than one artless expression and more than one lifelike touch of nature, not to be found in works prepared expressly for the public, calls for admiration. It is just the difference between a letter dashed off at one sitting and a letter carefully worked over.

But to what do all these prolegomena tend? Is it my intention to write a companion to Töppfer's treatise on "Drawings washed in with Indian Ink," or am I intending to write on "The Æsthetics of Sketching"?

SHORT SKETCHES

In no wise; I merely happen to possess a number of short sketches made here and there in the course of my walks, which are not sufficiently important to be published separately, but which, put together pell-mell under the glass of a passe-partout frame made of pine inlaid with maple, the corner of one overlapping the corner of another, may while away a quarter of an hour for any man who happens to look at them during the long siege evenings. It is a frame so filled that, with my reader's permission, I shall now hang upon the nail of the newspaper article.

IN THE TUILERIES GARDENS

This morning a balloon, the "Victor Hugo," was to make its ascent from the garden of the Tuileries, and I was anxious to witness the performance; but the filling of a balloon is but a slow process and the final preparations take up time. While the aeronauts, wearing long boots, and caps on which the word *Aer* is embroidered in gold, were coming and going, looking after every detail, examining the netting, trimming the sandbags, settling the sacks of despatches, hanging up the cases of pigeons, fastening to the ropes of the car the numbers of the Paris papers intended to give France

news of Paris, my mind, attracted at first by all this interesting bustle, was little by little drawn away from it by the incomparable magnificence of the prospect outspread before me, and in spite of everything, of the Prussians, of the siege, I was experiencing that feeling of intense inward happiness and serene joy which the contemplation of the beautiful assures to every soul, even in the saddest of times.

The heavens were wondrously clear, of a light, transparent blue, interpenetrated with light, and in them floated, like a feather fallen from a dove's wing, a small white cloudlet intended to bring out the tender azure tone by its reflection of the flush of dawn. I have never seen the sky so suave and diaphanous, save from the Acropolis of Athens, behind the Parthenon with its gilded marbles.

Beyond the gates, on the Place de la Concorde, the obelisk of Luxor, soft and tender in tone, the hue of the granite recalling flesh tints, cut, with its sharp line, the gate of the distant Arc de Triomphe; the obelisk completing the pylone. The trees that form the entrance to the Champs-Élysées, stripped of their leaves, resembled, with their delicate rosy-gray branches, the markings of an agate and indicated the boundaries of

the Place by their cross-hatching diapered with spots of light.

On the right, the handsome façade of the Garde-Meuble and the Ministry of Marine, masterpieces of Gabriel, in which the beauty of antiquity mingles so happily with French gracefulness, exhibited their porticoes composed of lissome Corinthian columns, which light shadows caused to stand out, and their crown of balusters, broken by acroters and trophies, over which flew the Red Cross flag.

In the foreground, on either side of the Tuileries gate pranced, on top of their pedestals, the Marly horses, divine thoroughbreds, descending from Pegasus, at least, unless they come from the stables of the Sun, full of fire and spirit, breathing light from their nostrils, and with marble hoofs that have never trod aught but the empyrean. Such steeds can be ridden by allegorical or mythological beings only. A figure of Fame, trumpet in hand, a Mercury known by his caduceus, lightly seated on the flanks of these noble animals like riders in a celestial circus in which the gods are the spectators, seemed to guide them by a mere effort of the will. Most elegant are these two equestrian groups carved in a cloud of white marble and showing

their contours against a china-blue sky. To beauty they add the air of heroic gallantry characteristic of the art of Louis XIV. At this moment they were lighted in the most favourable manner.

The terrace swept down towards the garden in a couple of fine horse-shoe curves ending with the splendid groups of the Saône and the Loire, and thus formed an admirable framework for a prospect that is unrivalled on earth.

Meanwhile the horses of the artillery train, ridden by gunners, were peacefully manœuvring round the great basin, two by two, and getting rid of the stiffness due to the evening air. Soldiers kneeling on the edge of the basin, from which the swans had flown away, were "washing glorious rags." The jet of water, the pressure having been turned down, lipped and lapped with a faint murmur that resembled a plaint. The Hermes, marble sentries that keep eternal watch and ward under the chestnut trees, were gazing with their great staring eyes at the huge pearl-like balloon that was being inflated, and, a little apart from the crowd, Horeau, the author of a great illustrated work on Egypt, struck by the magnificent sight, was making a hasty water-colour sketch of it.

SHORT SKETCHES

GASTRONOMICAL MELANCHOLY

Who among us has not stopped, on his way through the Palais-Royal, before Chevet's windows? It was a pleasure which the most spiritual-minded could not deny himself, for putting aside all ideas of good cheer, the splendid grouping of provisions could be admired just like a painting by Snyders, Weenincx or de Fyt. Outside hung roebucks, their black muzzles touching the heads of wild boars, stuffed with pistachios, and turning up their lips in grim fashion. On the white marble slabs, the great sea fish, laid on their sides, shimmered with silvery and pearly hues; lobsters marked with brown and yellow waved their formidable claws, and turtles gambolled awkwardly on the edge of the basin fringed with moss, in which, under the light splashing of a thin jet of water, swam Chinese carps. Close by, delicate pullets of le Mans, and turkeys of extraordinary size swelled out their breasts, distended and marbled of a blue tint by the truffles that showed through their thin skins. Grouse, pheasants in golden bronze plumage, Scotch ptarmigans, Russian hazel grouse, partridges with legs prettily gaitered with pink, seemed to be posing

purposely for the pleasure of painters as much as for that of *gourmets*.

I shall not speak of the *pâtés de foie gras*, of the Corsican blackbird pasties, of the brochettes of ortolans, and other "gallantries," as they say in Hamburg, but I cannot help recalling the Thommery grapes, golden as amber, the Montreuil peaches, which were not cheap two-penny half-penny peaches, despised by Alexandre Dumas the younger, but veritable virgin peaches that had lost none of their velvety bloom; the pomegranates, the bursting skin of which allowed a casket of rubies to show; the pears, so perfect that they seemed carved out of Florentine alabaster and intended to be served upon the tables of precious stones of the former Grand Dukes of Tuscany; in a word, the whole of that lovely assemblage of shapes and colours, that savoury Pantagruelian bouquet arranged with such consummate art.

It was raining the other night, and a fancy for shelter had led me under the arcades of the Palais-Royal. Mechanically, and from old habit, I turned to look at Chevet's windows. How greatly was I surprised on beholding, instead of the famous provision-shop, a dazzling tin-smith's shop that flashed with all

the crude brilliancy of a fairy-play stage-setting covered with imitation silver and gold! There was a regular architectural set piece of tin boxes, some round, some square, some oblong, symmetrically arranged like the basaltic columns of Fingal's Cave, their projecting sides gleaming with metallic lustre and exhibiting labels brightened with gilt varnish. I drew near. Alas! it was indeed Chevet's establishment, but comestibles there were no more — not fresh ones, at all events. As a last resort the *landsturm* of the canned goods had been sent to the front: canned milk, canned buffalo humps, canned reindeer tongues, canned tunny, canned Californian salmon, canned green peas, and even canned stewed beef; in fine, all the provisions that men take when bound to the Arctic or the Antarctic poles. The turtles had vanished in the last mock-turtle soups made for such of the English as had remained in Paris, while in the basin where the goldfish used to swim, mooned a little carp that did not look as though it had come from the Rhine.

I gazed at it with the indifference with which we contemplate things beyond our reach, and repeated the clown's philosophical remark, "I will call again next week."

Meanwhile in front of another one of the show-windows had formed a group which judging from the attitudes of its component parts, was filled with deepest admiration. Having approached, I saw at first nothing more than a root of ginseng, the pivots of which were squirming like the legs of Cornelius, the mandragora transformed into a field-marshal in Achille Arnim's tale, and two or three pots of Chinese ginger encased in bamboo wicker-work. But it was not these things that had called out the respectful admiration of the crowd; it was a lump of fresh butter, about half a pound in weight, placed triumphantly upon a plate. Never did the yellow block exhibited in the lottery of the golden nugget light up eyes with such admiration, such desire, such phosphorescence of covetousness. The burning glances gave way at times to softer ones, as the gazers remembered happier days.

The courage, the devotion, the self-sacrifice, the patriotism of Paris have been highly extolled. One word will sum it all up — Paris is doing without butter!

A LITTLE MUSIC

As the rain kept on, I continued my walk. At the entrance to the Galerie d'Orléans, the newspaper vendors, the pack of the press, were giving tongue loudly, and under the glazed roof their clamour was deafening. Buyers crowded around them, forming at this point a sort of black swarming crowd, but as soon as one moved on under the arcading, profound solitude was found. Although it was barely seven o'clock, the shops were closed; a few gas-jets, far apart, were blown about by the wind, and cast wet reflections upon the pools of rain water in the garden. Here and there ghost-like passed some belated pedestrian, hastening to his poor siege dinner: women dressed in black, drawing by the hand a child that followed them *non passibus æquis*, went along as fast as they could, their eyes on the ground, their veils drawn down; but there were very few of them, so that the long gallery seemed to be deserted.

Gusts of rain beat in through the open arcades and made the muddy flagging shimmer and shine. The damp air penetrated my clothing, although I was under shelter, and to the discomfort of the soul was added the dis-

comfort of the body. I kept thinking of the days when this arcaded way, blazing with light, reminded me of the Procuratie at Venice, by the bustle in the shops, the noise in the cafés, and the moving about of the people smoking their cigars. My thoughts were becoming gloomy, when suddenly a sound of music struck on my ear. I drew near; a crowd had collected near the Café de la Rotonde around two little Italian singing-girls.

The one, the elder, a lass of twelve or thirteen, with fair hair, blue eyes, regular, delicate features, and her piece of white linen folded on her head, was very like the Pasqua Maria painted by Bonnat and Jalabert. She wore the same apron, with transversal stripes of different colours, that is as thick as a carpet; the same coarse linen sleeves and skirt with straight folds; only, as the weather was cold, she had thrown over her shoulders a Parisian vestment, the gift, no doubt, of some charitable person, yet she remained pretty in spite of this violation of local colour.

The other, who seemed to be her younger sister, was fair also and was dressed almost in the same way, but her features had a more childish cast. Nor could her musical education have been carried as far as her sister's,

for her part in the concert was confined to marking the rhythm of the song with her tambourine and clashing its metal plates to support the violin part. I will not go the length of saying that the young performer was as clever as the Milanollo or Ferni sisters, but she really played not at all badly upon the poor little red fiddle on which she firmly pressed her small chin. The two sang together a number of those "cantilènes" of the Abruzzi that are full of such penetrating and passionate melancholy, and every stanza of which begins with the name of a flower, — "Fior di castagna, fior di camomilla, fior di rosa." It is impossible to render the charm imparted by the ambient sadness, the rain, the sombre night, and the thoughts of the listeners, more sombre still, to this rustically artless and plaintively sweet music. It came at the right moment to relax the nervous tension and to change sorrow into melancholy.

In order to end their concert with something of immediate interest and in the French taste, the two little girls played the "Marseillaise" with all the *furia* they were capable of. The taller tried to look fierce, and pressed her bow hard upon the strings; the younger pressing the rhythm, shook her tambourine like a bacchante, and Southern impulse carrying away the two tiny

artists, Rouget de Lisle's hymn ended in the *tempo* of a tarantella. Strange and charming was the effect produced by this contrast, which made one think of the bas-relief that represents children endeavouring to lift Hercules' club.

A NIGHT EFFECT

ALONG the quay there is a silence as of death, a solitude that is terrifying. One might be in a mediæval town at the hour of curfew; scarcely is heard in the distance the rolling of a carriage or the footsteps of a townsman returning home. The houses rise tall and dark, their roofs showing out in the night like black velvet upon black cloth. From the corner of the Quai Voltaire to the Dome of the Institute there are but three windows that are lighted; near the kiosk of the district inspector quivers the light of a belated cab. The street lamps, at half pressure, spot the darkness with scanty red dots, the reflection of which lengthens and melts in the river like a gout of blood. But suddenly a capricious blast of wind parts the clouds, and as many stars light up in the heavens as gas lamps go out on earth. The illumination up there is perfect.

IX

READING ÆSCHYLUS DURING THE SIEGE

IT is eight o'clock in the evening, and my meagre siege dinner has already been eaten and digested. Yet it is too early to go to bed, for the day dawns late in December. Let me make a call on a friend of my own age; the young fellows are on the ramparts or on the Avron plateau. Happy are the young! fatigue does not compel them to remain seated at the Scæan gates, like the old men in Homer, while the Greeks and Trojans are fighting in the plain. Out I go. The night is dark with a sinister darkness rayed by a slanting, wind-driven rain mingled with flakes of snow. The steam fire-engines on the quays disgorge livid smoke into the obscurity. The Seine runs inky, thick, oily, like the waters of the Styx or the Acheron. In quick succession pass by the river steamers, a light in the bows and another at the stern, their cabin windows streaming with light. They stop at the landing-places,

and, in the glare of the lamps and amid a confused swarming of shadows, fantastic and spectral groups become visible. They are wounded men being brought in; at least they will not have to lie on the battle-field until the wan winter morn dawns again, and the cold of night will not bind them with their coagulated blood to the hardened, frozen ground. They are carried to the ambulances, where every care awaits them, in carriages and on stretchers. Their glorious day is over, and if pain does not prevent their sleeping, they will dream of victory and deliverance.

On the darkened façade of the Louvre, on the other side of the river, two windows are blazing so brightly that the red flashes might lead one to suppose the interior on fire. Against the luminous background move to and fro, like shadow pictures that have not been held close enough to the transparent curtain, blurred shadows occupied with some serious job. The fire is being blown with a pair of bellows, and as the blaze brightens or fades, the shadows become stronger or fainter. But behind these panes there is not, as would have been taken for granted in the old days of Romanticism, a Ruggieri preparing poisons, or an alchemist looking in his retorts for the philosopher's

stone. The cause of that suspicious light is merely a forge, used for the repairing of the rifles of the *mobiles* and the National Guards.

I cross the Pont des Saints-Pères, and become the sport of the wind, that tries to carry my hat off into the river, a capital Gavroche trick that just then strikes me as in very bad taste. In the distance I could feel there were, as in Piranesi's shadowy engravings, opaque architectural masses and lines of quays marked by bright dots like those in blackened cardboard held to the light, but the fiery pearls were scattered far apart and no longer formed that brilliant line of light which forms the customary illumination of Paris.

The impression the scene made on me was one of sadness, solemnity, and grandeur. Through the broad arches guarded by the colossal statues of Peace and War, the Place du Carrousel showed shimmering with water, glacéd with reflections and crossed by a single bus, the red lights of which glared like the eyes of some monstrous insect crawling through the darkness.

After traversing a number of streets, that were so dark they looked exactly like saw-cuts in blocks of black marble, I reached my friend's house, and found he had fared forth in search of news, this being the

food still sought for most eagerly, poor as may be one's meals. I had perforce to return home, and once back, my feet in front of a widow's fire, by the light of a single wax candle, for in times of siege one must economise both fire and lights, and in my hand a book taken at random from the deal board on which rest the few volumes saved from my library, I began sadly enough my solitary evening.

The volume happened to be the "Plays of Æschylus," that proud genius who, disdaining his poetic fame, spoke, in the epitaph which he composed for himself, of his fame as a soldier only: "This monument covers Æschylus, son of Nuphorion. Born in Athens, he died in the fertile plains of Gela. The renowned woods of Marathon and the long-haired Medes shall tell of his courage. They beheld it."

The book opened of itself at the tragedy of "Seven against Thebes," as if Æschylus had intended to allude, from the depth of the ages, to the events of to-day.

Aristophanes, the merciless mocker, professed the deepest admiration for Æschylus, an admiration that caused him to be unjust to Euripides, whose merits he unduly depreciated, considering him to have corrupted

taste and manners, which he rendered more effeminate by his too lively painting of passions and his excessive striving after pathos. In the "Frogs" he awards the palm of tragedy to old Æschylus. Euripides asks of his fortunate rival, "How, then, did you create heroes?" — "With a tragedy filled with the spirit of Mars." — "Which one?" — "The 'Seven against Thebes.'" Every spectator went forth from the performance of that play filled with warlike fury.

This tragedy by the soldier who fought at Salamis, Marathon, and Platæa is absolutely unlike the modern idea of such a play. It is rather a dramatised fragment of an epic, something like an oratorio with recitatives and choruses. M. Alexis Pierron, who has translated the work of that great genius, short and grim, points out that the subject has been dramatised several times under different titles, and among others by Racine, under the name "The Hostile Brothers." Only, in Æschylus, the chief character, the one that fills the whole tragedy, and on which the interest is concentrated, is the city of Thebes. Polynices is seen when dead only, and Eteocles does not ever think of himself. He is the pilot at the tiller, as he says himself at the beginning of the play, and he is responsible for the lives of all on

board. Not one of the seven chiefs in the coalition appears, save in the narrative which itself is as good as an action. The preparations for the fight, a funeral dirge over the brothers who have slain each other, these are the elements of the play, but it is filled from end to end with terror and pity, as the old critics were wont to say; with the fate of the city threatened with fire and pillage.

With a few grand strokes, of which Michael Angelo's drawings alone can give any idea, Æschylus has traced a composition that seems the work of a Titan rather than that of a mortal, so far does it surpass the bounds of human genius. Overmastering power is felt in it, and the poet bears his reader upon his mighty hand like one of the statuettes of suppliants carried by the gods.

Strange to say, this sublime tragedy is at the same time a living tragedy, personal and contemporaneous, so to speak. The siege of Thebes brought me back to the siege of Paris, that I should have liked to forget for a time. Humanity is ever the same. The "Seven against Thebes" was first performed under the archonship of Theagenides, in the eighty-seventh Olympiad, that is, four hundred and sixty-eight years before Christ,

and yet the play might have been written yesterday, that is, supposing modern dramatists could ever attain to such beauty and power.

A chorus of women personifies the people of Thebes, Eteocles represents the defenders, and a scout incarnates the besieging army in reports incomparably poetical that sound like clarion blasts, and the words in which seem to shake plumes, to quote Aristophanes' expression.

The play opens with a speech by Eteocles, who realises the full responsibility that rests upon him, and shows himself as great a tactician as he is an excellent politician. He sends to the ramparts the men of mature age, and to the gates those who are in the bloom of their youth and the flower of their courage. "Duty commands; we have to save the city, the altars of our country's gods and their honours that are threatened, our children, this land which is our mother, our tender nurse, who bore the burden of our childhood since the day when, just born, we crawled upon her favouring soil, and who brought us up to be faithful inhabitants and warlike defenders in the day of need. . . . It is reported that last night the Achæans resolved on making a decisive assault, and that the city

has everything to fear. Run, you to the battlements, you to the gates of the ramparts; take up your weapons, put on your armour. Go, and standing firm on the platforms of the towers, on the avenues of the gates, lose none of your boldness, and be not dismayed at the multitude of your assailants. Heaven is on our side. I have despatched scouts and spies towards the army of the foe; I trust they will not have gone in vain, and informed by their reports, I shall be prepared to meet any surprise." Is it not just like reading one of the white Government posters that have been put up during the last few days upon the walls of Paris?

The scout returns and reports that he has seen the seven chiefs plunge their hands into the blood of a slain bull, and swear with horrible imprecations that they will conquer or die. Next they loaded a chariot with souvenirs intended for their relatives in the event of their being slain: locks of hair, buckles, and bracelets. Their eyes were wet with tears, but their resolution was unmoved. Lots had been drawn for the points to be attacked. . . . They seemed lions exciting each other to combat. "Choose your bravest men and post them on the avenues of the city. Hasten,

for the whole mass of the Achæan host is in motion; the dust is rising; white foam drops from the mouths of the coursers and flecks the plain. Be a far-sighted pilot for us. Place the city in safety ere Mars lets the storm loose. Seize quickly the opportune moment for defence. For my part, during the rest of the day, I shall faithfully watch the enemy, and reliable reports shall tell you of their movements in the plain, so that you shall be safe from danger."

On learning the approach of the enemy, the Theban women, less courageous than the women of Paris, utter cries of terror, beat their breasts, tear their hair, rush to the foot of the altars, stretch to heaven suppliant hands, and give themselves up to that excess of grief known to antiquity, in which Æschylus so well sums up the woe of a whole city or a whole people. In that tremendous chorus is uttered the despair of Thebes at bay, when, after a prolonged siege, it is about to be assaulted finally.

Eteocles is annoyed at the uproar; he fears that the cries, prayers, and tears will diminish the soldiers' courage, and he somewhat harshly bids the Theban women be still: "Do not, if you hear it said that men are being wounded and killed, begin to utter

lamentations, for carnage is the very food of the god Mars."

While I was reading the "Seven against Thebes" of old Æschylus, I fancied at times that I heard in the silence of night the dull reports of distant artillery fire. The means of destruction have been greatly improved on since the days of Eteocles and Polynices, when walls were attacked with stones.

Eteocles having gone forth, the chorus, somewhat reassured, depicts in anticipation the fate of a city taken by storm: "Everywhere violence, carnage, and fire; everywhere clouds of smoke, darkening the daylight. Furious Mars breathes destruction; there is nothing sacred to his cruel hands. The city resounds with dreadful howls; a bristling, impenetrable wall surrounds the vanquished; the warrior falls slain by a warrior's steel. The cries of new-born children slaughtered at their mothers' bleeding breasts are heard. Then comes pillage, the companion of murder. The soldiers bump against each other in the streets, bending under their burdens, and those who yet have nothing excite each other. Every man insists on having his share of the booty and none will yield aught. All desire to have the largest share. How can what then

happens be told? Fruits of all kinds strew the ground, a pitiful sight, and the eyes of housekeepers fill with burning tears. Mingled together all the produce of the ground drives along in the mud of the gutters. Young maids, that have never known suffering, will have, unfortunate slaves, to share obediently the bed of a fortunate warrior, of a victorious foeman. For them there is but one hope, death which will swallow them up in its night, death which will put an end to their dreadful woes."

Would not one swear, on reading this description, that Thebes was invested not by the Greeks, but by a Prussian army?

Happily Thebes is saved. Eteocles sets against the seven chiefs who are besieging the city's seven gates, an equal number of brave and skilful chiefs supported no doubt by reliable troops, though they are not mentioned in the tragedy, in accordance with the process of simplification regularly used by Æschylus.

The scout, who is unquestionably the greatest poet in the world, describes to Eteocles in admirable verse the appearance, attitudes and armour of each of the seven chiefs. Let me take at random the portrait of Tydæus; my reader may not be sorry to have the por-

trait of an Achæan chief: "The warrior as he shouts causes the triple aigrette, the mane of his helmet, to shake, and the brazen bells upon his buckler spread terror around. Upon his shield he wears a splendid emblem: the representation of the heavens with their dazzling stars. In the centre shines the full moon, the queen of stars, the eye of night. Thus does Tydæus, proud of his superb armour, standing on the river bank, loudly call for battle, like a spirited steed, irritated by the bit and impatient to spring forward at the sound of the trump."

As each portrait is traced, Eteocles chooses the hero he intends to oppose to the original. All these chiefs of the foe have coats of arms like mediæval knights. Capanæus has for an emblem a naked man, a torch in his hand, and the figure exclaims, in letters of gold, "I shall burn the city." Eteocles bears on his shield a soldier running up the rungs of a ladder and shouting the words inscribed: "Mars himself cannot cast me down from the ramparts." A typhon vomiting flames is engraved upon the shield, large as a wheel, of the giant Hippomedon, and handsome Parthenope has a sphinx for an emblem. The wise Amphiaraus has disdained any symbol. As for Polynices, two figures

appear on his buckler: a warrior in golden armour, and a woman advancing with majestic steps and leading the warrior by the hand; "I am Justice," says the inscription; "I shall bring this man back and restore to him the inheritance of his fathers." A lying prophecy, for Polynices owed his sepulture only to the piety of his sister Antigone.

It was growing late; no other sound was heard than that of the rain drops; the blast drove against the windows of my attic. My candle had burned down to the glass top of the candlestick and was about to make it crack. I closed the book after reading the following words of good omen, the concluding words of the "Seven against Thebes:" "Next to the mighty Jupiter, next to the immortals, he it is who has saved the race of Cadmus, he it is who repulsed the tide of strangers that prepared to swallow it up."

X

MORE SKETCHES

DECEMBER, 1870.

I

THE SNOW MUSEUM

ONE of my painter friends called for me last night to take me to Bastion No. 85, where, he averred, I would see something interesting: only we must hurry, for in these gloomy December days night comes on early, and, besides, a change of temperature might destroy the object of our pilgrimage. So we went off in hot haste, cursing the slow pace of our unfortunate cab horse that went slipping and sliding about on the hardened snow, which became all the slipperier the farther we ventured into the deserted streets of the quarters that stretch beyond the Luxembourg and the Observatoire. There were but few passers-by, but on every square, at every meeting of four streets, on every empty space suited to manœuvring, were to be seen National Guards going through their drill in spite

of the very sharp cold, which, however, they did not seem to mind.

We were driving along tall gray walls placarded with old posters, queer old houses devoted to businesses that the city relegates to its extremities, board erections, ambulances or shelters for the troops, dismantled fences the tone of which recalled drawings on tinted paper, touched up with white, the layers of snow clinging here and there taking the place of the dabs of body colour. If the rising mist had not limited the prospect in the foreground, we could have seen over the low walls, in the frames of the open doors, through the openings in the hovels, wonderful bits of winter landscape in the direction of the cultivated grounds and swamps which the Bièvre overflows and over which rises the Butte-aux-Cailles, but this was not the object of our excursion and I therefore did not feel the disappointment very keenly.

On reaching the chemin de ronde of the rampart, we left our vehicle, the horse of which had fallen, and my friend led me to the spot where was to be seen the curiosity he had promised me and which proved well worth the trip to the bastion.

The seventh company of the 19th battalion of the

National Guard contains a number of painters and sculptors who very soon tired of the excitement of the everlasting game of chuck-farthing, and were only too glad to fill up their leisure time in some other way. Pipes, cigars, and cigarettes help to while away the time, and discussions on art and politics occasionally kill it, but no man can go on indefinitely smoking, talking, or sleeping. Now, during the past three or four days, snow has fallen quite abundantly; in the interior of the city it was already half melted, but on the rampart, more exposed to the cold wind blowing in from the country, it had remained. And as there is always in an artist, no matter what his age may be, a remnant of boyishness and mischievousness, at the sight of the lovely white carpet, the idea of a snowball fight immediately suggested itself as a seasonable diversion. Two sides were formed, and willing hands converted into projectiles the brilliant frozen crystals collected on the slopes. The battle was just about to begin, when some one cried out: "Would it not be better to make a statue with these snowballs?" The notion took at once, for Falguière, Moulin, and Chapu were on duty that day. A rough matrix was formed with stones picked up here and there, and the artists, whom

Chapu kindly served as assistant, set to work, making use of the quantities of balled snow handed them by their comrades.

Falguière made a statue of Resistance, and Moulin a colossal bust of the Republic. Two or three hours were sufficient to enable them to carry out their inspiration, which proved most happy. Nor is this the first time that great artists have condescended to carve the Carrara marble that falls to earth from heaven in the form of glittering powder. To please Pietro de' Medici, Michael Angelo modelled a colossal statue in snow — a rare thing in Florence — in the very court-yard of the palace, and this piece of playfulness in which shone the artist's genius — for the material matters little, provided the thought be there — won him the good graces of the new Grand Duke, who protected him as Lorenzo the Magnificent had done.

Falguière's statue is placed at the bottom of an epaulement, not far from the guard-house, on the edge of the chemin de ronde, and it looks out towards the country. The refined artist to whom we owe the "Victor of the Main," "The Little Martyr," and "Ophelia," has not given to his "Resistance" the robust, almost virile form and the Michaelangelesque

muscles the subject seems to call for. He understood that it was moral rather than physical Resistance which ought to be shown, and instead of incarnating it under the features of a sort of female Hercules ready for the fray, he has given it the somewhat delicate grace of a modern Parisian woman. Resistance, seated or leaning, rather, upon a rock, has crossed her arms on her breast with an air of inflexible resolve. Her dainty feet, the toes of which are clutching the stone, seem to be trying to grasp the ground. She has thrown back her hair with a proud gesture of the head, as if to show the foe her lovely face, more terrible than that of Medusa. On her lips plays the faint smile of heroic disdain, and in the bent brows is concentrated the obstinacy of a defence that will never yield. No, indeed; never shall the barbarian's huge fists bind these delicate and slender arms behind that back with its elegant lines; that lithe waist shall break rather than bend; immaterial force shall overcome brutal strength, and like Raphael's angel, shall set its foot upon the monstrous quarters of the beast.

Below this improvised statue, Falguière was modest enough to inscribe in black lettering upon a bit of board — "Resistance." There was no need of the

inscription, for no matter who may look upon the figure, so obstinately energetic, will at once put the name to it, even did it not have by its side a cannon made of snow.

It is regrettable to reflect that the first warm breeze will cause this masterpiece to melt and vanish; but the artist has promised that when he is relieved he will make a reduced replica in clay or wax in order to preserve the expression and the movement.

On the highest point of the epaulement stands the bust of the Republic, by Moulin, its glance seeming to look far over the bastion over the surrounding country. But that is not the place to look at it from; the proper place is from the chemin de ronde, at the foot of the slope. While the artist was working at the "Republic," the lines of which are to be lengthened and combined in order to be seen from far below, his friends shouted to him: "Put on more brow; stiffen the cheek; bring the chin out; put more snow on the cap." And the artist, perched on the epaulement like a Greek workman at the top of a pediment, listened to the suggestions and the criticisms, and the bust assumed a majestic and dread beauty.

What admirable material is that celestial Parian marble called snow! What immaculate whiteness it

has! what a fine grain, what a sparkling like mica and silver dust! How softly do the colourless figures modelled out of that silky down stand out against the cottony background of mist and distant trees that, as they tip the lower gray sky, seem to be light reddish mists!

II

ART DURING THE SIEGE

Once art has seized upon a man's soul, it haunts him all the time, possesses him, to use the word in its liturgical sense, and no exorcism can drive it out of him. Besides, the soul loves the dæmon, though it torments her and makes her suffer, and would deeply regret being freed from it for ever. Nothing can draw the poet from his ode, the sculptor from his statue, the painter from his canvas. In the midst of the greatest catastrophes they are full of a rime, a form, a colour. It does not prevent their devoting themselves to their country, sacrificing their lives coolly, and shooting as straight as a franc-tireur. But through the event they always behold nature; they draw beauty from horror's self and seek to transpose facts into the sphere of art.

Note that robust, well-set-up young fellow who has perhaps enlisted in a marching regiment; he is doing his sentry-go on the rampart, and through the embrasures formed by the sandbags he casts from time to time over the suspicious horizon the painter's all-discerning glance. The countryside is quiet and he falls back into his reverie. An image presents itself to his mind, and he extends and transforms it into a symbol. A woman dressed in black passed by, a balloon flew through the air, a fort was shelling the Prussians, and out of these facts that are wholly unconnected, and that remain meaningless to the inattentive pedestrian, he brings forth a lovely composition, full of feeling and tender poesy.

Puvis de Chavannes has brought back from the ramparts a superb drawing which he has had lithographed, and which recalls the grand and simple manner of the artist to whom we owe the magnificent frescoes on canvas called "War," "Peace," "Labour," and "Rest." A slender, lissome woman in long mourning garments, her hair cut like a widow's, her right hand resting on a chassepot with the bayonet fixed, and the left outstretched to heaven, her face in quarter profile, is standing on the earthwork of a bastion. The folds of her

garment, that break round her feet like the stiff breaks of the folds of Gothic draperies, form a pedestal for her and add to her elegance. Somewhat beneath her are seen cannons, gabions, piles of cannon-balls; from a fort the profile of which is recognised as that of Mont-Valérien escape horizontal masses of smoke, and in one corner of the heavens, already blurred by the distance is seen the faint shape of a balloon, the only means of communicating with the outer world that is left to us.

The symbolical figure, which might be real and be a portrait just as well as a piece of generalisation, follows the balloon with a look full of anxiety and love, for the frail airship is freighted with great hopes.

At the bottom of the drawing are the words: "The City of Paris, invested, entrusts to the air its appeal to France!"

So touching a figure calls for a companion: "Paris pressing to its heart the messenger dove, the bearer of glad tidings." And in order to give it the right expression, all Puvis de Chavannes has to do is to think of Mlle. Favart reciting "The Pigeons of the Republic," in a gown that shimmers like the plumage of the bird itself. He can while his time at that when his next turn of duty comes round, and he sees flying

across the heavens our winged letter-carriers that are pursued but not overtaken by Bismarck's hawks.

III

IN THE NIGHT

As I was returning with my friend, who also turned to account his leisure hours on the ramparts, and etches with striking originality the extraordinary aspects of war's horrors seen through the refinements of civilisation, he showed me a few notes jotted down among sketches in his note-book: "The guard awakened suddenly. The call to quarters. Running to the bastion. The Prussians attempt a surprise that is at once foiled. Lowering, rainy sky illumined with intermittent flashes when the forts of Ivry and Bicêtre, the lights of which are visible, begin firing, while reddish reflections only are seen in the direction of the other battery. On the dark background, as on burning paper over which the sparks travel, the rattle of musketry multiplying its numerous, luminous dots and forming capricious lines. A haze like an aurora borealis quivers on the horizon; it is Gachan burning; and at times the fort of Bicêtre casts a long beam of electric light like the forked tongue of a serpent. That beam, of a

white, dead tint, resembles a moonbeam or an immense band of paper suddenly unrolled upon the landscape, which forthwith loses its colouring and assumes tones of Spanish white. The beam is seen edgewise, which adds to the strangeness of the effect. Soon everything sinks back into darkness and silence."

IV

MOONLIGHT ON THE BASTION

YESTERDAY there was the loveliest moonlight in the world, a moonlit night such as one seldom sees in our Northern lands. It was not day, yet it was not night. Moonlight, whether it be brilliant or not, has the property of decomposing colours and casting over all objects a uniform hue midway between grayish blue and hydrangea. It brings out the modelling only by the contrast of black and white, and over all it casts its dust as brilliant as mica.

But this time the boarding of the huts and canteens preserved perfectly its pale salmon tint; the ochre of the slopes did not turn to chalk; what was red remained red; the colour of the uniforms of the sentries pacing along the banquette with shouldered arms was easily recognisable; in the background, against a steel blue

sky, the silhouette of Paris exhibited the domes of the Pantheon and the Val-de-Grâce in shadowy tones of intense violet, while beyond the rampart, the land dusted with snow produced the effect of a vast silver relief, or rather of a portion of the moon seen through a telescope.

XI

THE ANIMALS DURING THE SIEGE

FEBRUARY, 1871.

A QUESTION which a dreamer may well ask himself is whether animals observe events which occur around them and yet appear to be outside the range of their instinct. Of course Descartes' partisans would at once reply in the negative, for to them animals are mere machines, a kind of spit performing its appointed work in unconscious fashion; but those who have lived familiarly with animals, man's lower friends and humble brethren, who have watched and observed them attentively, hold a different opinion. Democritus understood the language of birds, and Dupont de Nemours has composed the dictionary of it. Without going so far, it is not impossible for an observer to form an idea of the impressions and judgments of animals.

It is not probable, for instance, that the dogs were

aware of our being invested by the Prussians. They are not acquainted with King William, M. de Bismarck, or Moltke, but they quite understood, and at the very beginning, the abnormal situation of the city. The unaccustomed bustle of the population, the almost universal change from civil dress to military uniforms, the drilling of the Mobiles and the National Guards on the squares, the bugle-calls and drum-beats startled them, astonished them, and gave them food for reflection. Some of them, who had come in for refuge with their owners, were plainly bewildered by the novelty of the place; they hesitated about the street they ought to follow, their gait uncertain, smelling the road and consulting at the corners some fellow-canine inhabiting the quarter. The suburban dogs looked quite unlike the city dogs, and could easily be distinguished by their rustic and country look. As soon as they heard the rumbling of a carriage, they hastened to get out of the way, plainly frightened, while the Parisian dogs scarcely condescended to move a little bit out of the road just as they were about to be run over, like dogs who have the right to the crown of the causeway. The others had all the timidity of the country-dweller.

There was held every morning in front of my door a meeting presided over by a well-set-up brindled bull-terrier, his legs slightly bowed, his lower lip projecting, his upper one turned back; he wore a black leather collar studded with brass scales. The other dogs, of less breeding, that surrounded him, appeared to think highly of him and to listen deferentially to his remarks.

To listen? Did the dog speak? Certainly he did; not, it is true, after the manner of men with articulate speech; to quote the fine expression Homer employs to distinguish our own sort of animals, but in short barks, in varied growls, in play of the lips, in wagging of the tail, and in expressive play of his features. It is certain that the group of quadrupedal conversationalists was discussing the situation. From time to time a new-comer appeared to bring a piece of news, which was talked over, and then the company broke up, each member of it going off to attend to his own affairs.

This was at the beginning of the siege, at the time when food had not yet become scarce. The stock of beef was still large, and the high price of fodder caused horseflesh to be abundant, the public, at that time, not having taken kindly to hippophagy. At first animals did not suffer; the menu of their meals remained about

the same, but matters soon changed: the resistance was prolonged, and the rations of the lower animals were diminished like those of human beings. The poor creatures could not make it out, and looked at their masters with questioning eyes when their meagre pittance was handed them. They seemed to inquire what they had been guilty of, and why they were being punished for faults they had not committed. Numbers of dogs were deserted or purposely lost by their masters, who had not the courage to kill them, for "the best thing about a man is his dog," as Charlet's trooper says, and matters must go very hard with a man before he can bring himself to part with his four-footed friend. More than one poor devil shared his last crust with his dog, and in one club there was a general revolt of the tender-hearted when it was moved that all these "useless mouths" should be pitilessly sacrificed. A few kindly souls also put in a word in favour of the cats, which have their good side also, in spite of the slanders circulated about them by evil-minded people.

I often met, on my way home at night, vagabond dogs wandering like shadows along the sombre walls, mooning along as dogs do that are bound nowhere in particular. When I happened to pass under the flicker-

ing light of an oil lamp, and they saw that I looked fairly good-natured, they would follow me at a respectful distance, just out of reach of a kick or a cut with a stick, if perchance the pedestrian should prove to be a mortal of unkindly disposition; though dogs are rarely mistaken in this respect, being naturally better physiognomists than Lavater himself.

It is very touching to see one of these poor, lost creatures, tired out by vain hunting about in the mazes of a strange city, trying to attach itself to a master and to get a new boss for itself. It will accompany you on a long walk, yapping by your side in a plaintive tone, looking at you affectionately and occasionally putting its wet nose into the palm of your hand. It is caressing obsequiousness, not importunate, and marks a good dog separated from its master by some sad fate, in spite of its devotedness, and one who will serve you faithfully if you choose to accept it. Some used to come to my very door with me, and I own it wrung my heart to be compelled to shut it in their faces and to flout their hopes. I am of the same way of thinking as Crébillon, the tragic writer, who used to pick up lost dogs, put them under his cloak, take them to his home, where he gave them shelter, tried to teach

them a trade, such as turning the spit, dancing, jumping for the King or the Queen, giving a paw, and other canine performances, and then, if they proved stupid, rebellious, or lazy, would take them back with a sigh to the place where he had found them. But I had already my own private menagerie and experienced much difficulty in feeding it.

Soon the animals noticed that men looked at them in a strange fashion, and that under pretext of caressing them, they felt them with their hands, with a butcher's touch, to make sure of their more or less good condition. They had turned into a prey for man, into game that was hotly tracked. The cats, cleverer and more distrustful than dogs, were the first to understand this, and exhibited great prudence in their dealings with humanity. It was only with tried friends of the feline race that they ventured to purr and to take their usual place upon their knee, but at the least abrupt gesture, they bolted to roofs and inaccessible cellars. The dogs, having at last seen the change, fled like hares when they were called, though nooses, bags, and clubs managed none the less to secure many a victim. Shops for the sale of dog and cat flesh, as well as of rats, boldly set up their signs, making no attempt to deceive

their customers with regard to the kind of meat they dealt in. They were crowded with purchasers.

The morning reunion in front of my door diminished in numbers day by day, and soon the only one left was the bull terrier, wondering, as he lay on the threshold of his master's shop, at the mysterious disappearance of his friends. For the matter of that, he also was on the look-out, scented danger afar and showed his teeth at the approach of any suspicious person. When he saw some evil-looking prowler go by with a bag, he would take refuge under the counter with low growls.

At the beginning of the siege the posts on the ramparts had a large attendance of dogs that had taken up their permanent quarters there. They welcomed the guard coming off with wagging tails, and the guard marching on with joyous barks. They shared the soldiers' rations, but they took only the meat offered them and disdained bread with proud nostrils. Hunger speedily made them less particular; only, after a time, they were promoted to be themselves eaten, helping out the short commons or being sold to third-rate restaurant-keepers, and the posts little by little lost their guests.

ANIMALS DURING THE SIEGE

A single dog remained faithful to the sector. He could be seen travelling along the rampart, as if he were going the rounds, his flanks sunken, his bones sticking out, the vertebræ of his back resembling a chaplet, the spinal nodus prominent, the processes of the joints almost piercing the skin, his ribs like barrel hoops, and his coat harsh and coarse like dry grass. Thus he roamed around, more misanthropical than Timon of Athens, avoiding men, and especially soldiers, with as much care as he formerly sought them out; a poor simple-hearted quadruped, he considered that the conduct of the *bimanas*, genus *primates*, whom he had too long thought well of, was lacking in decent regard to his species, and he bore him a grudge in consequence. He was the ghost of a dog revisiting the pale glimpses of the moon; two profiles gummed one upon the other; a piece of cutting-out with no thickness whatever. The poor animal had chosen for his solitary walks the spot where had been modelled in snow the statue of Resistance, by Falguière, and the colossal bust of the Republic by Moulin. An artist who was often on guard on that bastion, noticed the unhappy creature, and becoming interested in him attempted to ingratiate himself with him by making all sorts of ad-

vances to him. He called him in a caressing voice, and sitting down on a stone in order not to frighten him away by appearing to track him down if he were to walk towards him, he exhibited from afar an appetising piece of bread. Drawn by the bait, the animal stopped but made no attempt to come near, in spite of the hunger that gnawed at his vitals. Then my friend placed the bread on a stone and discreetly withdrew. Then the dog overpassed the dividing space with a prodigious leap, seized the bread, and vanished afar with the speed of a greyhound in order to devour his prey in a safe place.

After the dogs and the cats the birds' turn came. The ornithology of Paris is not very varied; it comprises little else than sparrows, and, in the old gardens of the quieter districts, a few thrushes, and nightingales. The sparrows, winged street Arabs, regular gutter Gavroches, are beloved of the Parisians and enjoy in the city an immunity comparable to the privileges of the pigeons of Saint Mark's. Seed is not scattered for them at regular hours, it is true, nor do they have an income of their own, like the Venetian birds, but they are allowed to pick shamelessly everywhere, and the bird-charmers in the gardens of the

Tuileries throw bread crumbs to them; they go and come, chatter and flutter about, move only when you are on the point of stepping on them, and their twittering fills the atmosphere with gaiety. Until now their innocent lives have been respected of all men, nor, indeed, are they very fat under their feathery covering, these careless little Bohemians burned up with ardour and cleverness. But hunger made them as valuable as larks or ortolans.

People had begun to hunt them, and for a time, accustomed as the birds were to the sound of musketry and heavy guns, they could not bring themselves to believe that this new fusilade was directed against them, believing themselves unworthy of so great an expenditure of powder and shot. They were shot at with pea-shooters, limed twigs and snares were set for them, and they perforce had to believe their own eyes and recognise the fact that the old pact of friendship was broken and that in Paris they were reckoned as game. Excessive mistrust took the place of perfect faith. A creature, once it has been deceived, long remembers it, and the once tame sparrow became wild and shy. Any man, even if inoffensive, henceforth was looked upon as a hunter, and the little clients who,

in snowy weather, used to come fearlessly to my window to eat a few crumbs of my meagre pittance, came no more, although I have a brahminical respect for animal life. Hunted down, shot, and decimated, the whole army of them determined to emigrate, and painful as it is to leave the old ivy-covered wall where the nests are built in springtime, the cornice of the palace where one has been wont to preen one's feathers, the dormer window that frames in the young work-girl bending over her task, they set off to seek safety afar.

There is not a single sparrow to be seen in Paris to-day, yet I hope all have not been killed. A few strokes of the wing, and they are away beyond reach of shot, for the bird is not handicapped by our fatal heaviness, and can always flee from earth into the heavens. Blessed privilege!

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An Execution without Trial, under the Moorish Kings of Granada. By H. Regnault

XII

THE ANIMALS IN THE ZOÖLOGICAL GARDENS

FEBRUARY, 1871.

WHILE I was interested in the sufferings of domesticated animals during the siege, I was no less most solicitous of the condition of the wild beasts kept captive in the Zoölogical Gardens. It is bad enough to be taken away from one's natural surroundings and imprisoned within a narrow cage, without having, in addition, to suffer the pangs of hunger. These poor brutes, guiltless of man's barbarous folly, suffer the reaction from it with touching resignation. They are filled with amazement, and gaze upon you with eyes enlarged by thinness and brimful of questionings, seeming to say: "Since you can no longer feed us, at least restore us to liberty." I therefore resolved to pay a call upon the former inhabitants of the desert.

Everywhere in the city, driven by hunger to caprices

and depravation of taste, the most extraordinary dishes were talked about: tiger cutlets, bears' hams, buffalo humps, elephants' feet with melted butter sauce, filets of llama, camels' ribs, saddle of kangaroo, jugged monkey, boa constrictor with Tartare sauce, pickled crocodile, fricassee of pheasant, Numidian cranes with chasseur sauce, truffled ostrich livers, chaud-froids of toucan and horned screamer, and other zoölogical combinations which caused me to be alarmed concerning the inhabitants of the Zoölogical Gardens, although it did strike me as strange that a national establishment should dispose of its collections in such a way. The exotic additions to the siege bill of fare were drawn from the Jardin d'Acclimatation, the two young elephants there having been sold at a very high figure, as were also several other animals that had formerly attracted public curiosity, and this it was that accounted for the culinary eccentricities reported in the press.

I first tried to enter by the main gate at the end of the bridge, but it was closed on account of the ambulance huts that have been erected in this part of the grounds. Through the windows I could see rows of beds and the sick lying in them at full length or sitting up and reading a paper, according to the nature of

their wounds. This retreat of science and reflection, where, when I was quite a young chap, I used to come to scan my first verses, — a long time ago now, — presented a strange appearance, transformed as it was into a refuge for the victims of war.

A side door that stood open some distance away, enabled me to enter the grounds, the first animal that welcomed me with a glance, its nose flattened against the wire of its paddock, being a small Shetland pony, shaggy and rough in its winter coat. It was so small that the horse butcher could not have got more than a few pounds' weight of meat out of it. I soon reached the dens of the wild animals that men, who ought rather to retain the term for themselves, call ferocious. Some of the dens had been protected in anticipation of the bombardment, which had not yet begun. The protection consisted of a mass of paving stones and earth on which grass was already forming verdant mosaics. This, however, was intended merely as a place of refuge; the other dens, with the shutters raised, allowed their wonted prisoners to be seen behind the bars. The bears were swaying in a way they have, that makes them look like *aïssaouas* working themselves up for their performances, or were trotting around,

rubbing their noses against the bars as though they expected to find a flaw in them. Their thick fur prevented my ascertaining how far they had lost condition in consequence of the fasting enforced on them by the siege. Besides, they, no doubt, like all animals that in the wild state go to sleep during the winter, added to their diminished rations the extra fat on their bodies intended to nourish them during their period of torpor.

The lions preserved their majestic attitude. They accept captivity with disdainful resignation; so soon as they have assured themselves that escape is out of the question, they cease to struggle and do not allow their gaolers to watch useless attempts at freedom. They are animals of noble race that, like aristocrats, despise the mean human beings who have treacherously trapped them in an infamous snare. As I gazed upon them, Victor Hugo's lines came back to me: —

"The lions in the den had tasted no food: Captive, they roared to mighty Nature that cares for brutes within their darksome dens. For three long days had the lions eaten naught."

I do not believe the lions in the Zoölogical Gardens had been fasting as long as those in the den

wherein Daniel was cast by order of King Nabuchodnosor, but all the same they could not have had a very plentiful dinner: it probably consisted of refuse portions of horses that had died of sickness and been condemned as unfit for human consumption, a poor feed for those tremendous eaters that consume annually in Algeria, as is shown by statistics, twelve thousand francs' worth of oxen, sheep, and goats, apart from gazelles and wild boars, and whose princely appetites will have none other prey than a living one. They must have felt disgusted with these fetid remains, fit only for hyenas and vultures. One of them was pacing up and down in an aimless sort of way, lashing his sides with his tail; the other was lying down in a corner of the den, one fore paw outstretched, the other half-bent back under his chest, his head looking like a human face, with its straight nose, its broad brow, its stiff mustaches like silver threads, and its wild tawny mane. Melancholy was the look in his yellow eyes that gazed into space; perhaps in his hungry reverie he was thinking of the antelopes that repair to the watering place in the evening to slake their thirst. As he lay there, he seemed to be waiting for Delacroix to paint him or Barye to carve him. Still more touch-

ing was the sight of a poor sick lioness, so thin that she was almost diaphanous, and apparently in the last stages of consumption. Worn to a shadow, hollow-flanked like a greyhound, she had become ideally elegant and resembled the lions rampant on old coats of arms, which were half ornaments, half monsters, with sharply defined, cursive touches, that heraldic art cut out upon the fields of metals or tinctures, "armed and langued gules." Her pale yellow coat caught the light and made her stand out from the penumbra in which the back of the den was plunged; she was set on her four legs, the muscles of which, once vigorous, formed furrows in her skin. In her yearning, shivering attitude could be read the nostalgia of the desert and the burning rocks of the Atlas Mountains, while the disease imparted to her glance a sort of unwonted gentleness and a despairing expression. Deprived of her strength, the lioness appeared to be imploring human pity. More than once have I noted that look in dying animals; it is intensely tragical, and no one can see it without emotion. I learned lately, by an official report published in the press, that the poor lioness has died.

A jaguar has also died, but it has not been sold for

butcher's meat. The Zoölogical Gardens are fond of their animals, care for them tenderly, and do not barter them away.

The two tigers did not appear to have suffered much, for under their splendid tawny coats, rayed with stripes of black velvet, their poor condition was not easily marked; one of them was licking its paws and passing them over its face to wash it, with a cat-like gesture that is said to foretell rain. The second had dashed abruptly against the bars with a low roar, and remained standing there, exhibiting its cavernous mouth bristling with fangs and the silky hairs on its stomach. It may be that it had noted among the spectators a desirable prey from which it was parted by the bars of the den — perhaps a baby in its nurse's arms. Its pose was superb, for nature models and paints these mighty felines to perfection, and lavishes beauty upon these formidable animals.

I was bound to pay a visit to the pit of Martin, the bear. Martin, just then, was not climbing up the dead tree planted in the middle of his den, as he used to do in order to get hold of the rye roll tied to a string and pulled up little by little, a performance that delighted invalids, soldiers and their sweethearts, and even idling

philosophers. There was nobody now to watch his pretty ways; no climbing bears, no Bruin rising up on its hind legs, and learned in the accomplishments of which Atta-Troll, the hero of Heinrich Heine's poem, was so proud. Only a young cub busy, for lack of sight-seers, in looking at itself, a shaggy Narcissus, with amorous complacency, in a pool of water formed by the overflow from the trough. It was gazing at itself in that mirror, bending its head, making faces to itself, plunged in ecstacy and apparently delighted with its own charms. The reflection of its own image had at first surprised it, then it had come to the conclusion that it was handsome, and smiled away at itself in the most comical fashion. Hyenas also are conceited, and the Arabs say that to catch them one need only hold out a mirror to them and promise them kohl to line their eyelids with. But indeed the young bear cub, with its tawny fur on which shimmered redder gleams, its bright oblique eyes, its black, grained nose, like a truffle, was, in its way, handsome and elegant. It would have looked well on a settee in a boyar's ante-chamber, and would have proffered quite gracefully the glass of spirits offered by way of welcome to visitors. And tender Mummia, faithless to her duty as a well-

behaved female, might perhaps have given it a rendezvous in her Pyrenean cavern.

Some distance off, a camel had passed over the palisade of its plot of grass, its benignant and hideous face at the end of its long neck recalling the evocation scene in Cazotte's "The Devil in Love," in which the fantastic camel says in a hollow voice, "*Che vuoi?*" Yet I must own that this worthy ruminant had nothing to do with witchcraft, and its grumbling meant no more than, "Give me bread or cake." But such dainties are not plentiful in times of siege, and an owner of a cake, or even of a stale bun, would have devoured it with delight. The poor brute appeared to be very much put out at its lack of success, and to wonder why it was being deprived of its provender.

The elephants also were in very bad humour. The largest was fighting its keeper, who was trying to make it go in, and the two others looked uncommonly queer. They had become exceedingly thin, and their skin was a great deal too large for their frames. The gray skin, cracked like dried clay, formed heavy folds at the joints, like an ill-fitting coat. Long wrinkles furrowed their thighs, and their ears, with their thick membranes,

fell down either side of their huge bald heads like frayed and blackened standards. They kept waving their trunks that looked like giant leeches, and their tails at the same time, these recalling the queues formerly worn by hussars and postilions. They had in vain stretched their flexible proboscides towards the public, and now they angrily turned their backs upon the sight-seers; but these manifestations of wrath proving insufficient, they were trumpeting furiously. The trumpeting of an elephant is the most strange, terrifying, and dread noise that can be heard; if one does not know what it is and hears it suddenly, it fills the bravest with terror. It is impossible to say at first what it is, and whether it comes from heaven or hell, whether it is the roar of thunder or a subterranean rumbling. It swells like an organ pedal note or bursts out like the blast of the trumpets round Jericho, with strident uproar that deafens one. It is the very voice of an antediluvian monster, that has escaped the flood and preserved the vigour of primitive life. On this particular day, the elephants were proving themselves decidedly unreasonable, and their harsh trumpeting put to flight the rhinoceros, whose horned carapace I had barely time to get a glimpse of from behind. What

is the use of making such a row because you have had a few mouthfuls of bread less than usual? Do you not understand, ye wise animals, that our city is invested?

Within their rustic huts and trellised enclosures, in which winter had left some green grass, I found the llamas, the vicunas, the antelopes, the Canadian moose, the kiangs, the zebras, and all the movable estate of the Zoölogical Gardens in their entirety, and, in addition, wombats, and a curious animal, between a tapir and a wild boar, with which I am unacquainted, and which has been brought from Australia, the land of the black swan, the ornithorhynchus, the opossum, the kangaroo, and other zoölogical eccentricities. The "Monkey Palace," as it was formerly called, had lost a large proportion of its population; the baboons, the mandrills, the bonnet-apes, the cynocephali, the long-tailed monkeys, the sapajous, the papions, the marmosets, had been decimated by the cold and numbers of them had succumbed to lung diseases. The aviaries had retained the greater number of their guests, which did not seem to be disturbed by the distant sound of the cannonade, so soon to be replaced by the shriek and bursting of shells.

As it was growing late, I retraced my steps by a different way in order to get back to the river steamer, which, on excursions like this, is greatly to be preferred to a bus, and as I walked I listened to the chatter of a small boy of six or seven years of age, hanging on to his mother's skirts, and looking at the animals in their enclosures. He stopped at every label and said to the young mother, "Would you eat that one, mother?" And as he spoke the young carnivorous being's eyes glittered with desire. His mother would reply: "These animals are not intended to be eaten. These are very rare, costly, and pretty creatures, and it would be necessary to go very far away to get others." The child remained silent, but as he came opposite a zebra, a deer, a mountain sheep, or an elk, he would again repeat his question without fail, "Would you eat that one, mother?" I suspect the little rascal must have been first cousin to Fanfan Benoîton who when asked, "Whom do you love most, your father or your mother?" replied, "I love meat most."

XIII

HENRI REGNAULT

FEBRUARY, 1871.

BEFORE the siege I was not personally acquainted with Henri Regnault, although I had been one of the first to hail, at its dawn, his talent, the sun of which was to rise so high in the heavens, as though conscious of the short time it was to shine upon the horizon. Although there is a natural sympathy between critics and artists, we had not met, for he was traversing Spain and Morocco in the course of trips that took him far from the Villa Medici, where he made but brief stay, while I was running away from dramatic criticisms in Egypt, Italy, and Switzerland. This was not a very good way to insure our meeting, so one evening he was kind enough to allow a mutual friend to bring him to the attic where I had taken refuge.

Clairin, himself an artist of note, his *fidus Achates*, his comrade in arms, his bosom friend, accompanied him.

Both wore the military harness which every man in Paris who was fit to use a chassepot has worn constantly for more than four months. Regnault was in Tangier when the disaster at Sedan opened to the Prussians the road to the great capital, the brain of the universe, the heart of France. He had just installed himself there in a vast studio with the object of studying thoroughly the Eastern world, still so novel though Decamps, Marilhat, and Delacroix had painted it, the mysterious world of Islam, hitherto closed to art, and in which the noblest and purest types have been perpetuated. Thence it was that he had sent on the "Execution without Trial under the Moorish Kings of Granada," which, alas! proved to be his last work. He might have remained in Tangier, for his having won the Roman scholarship exempted him from military service; he was entitled to preserve his life for the benefit of art, but there are privileges that a generous soul refuses to profit by. He hurried home, in time to be shut up in Paris and to share the dangers run by his friend Clairin.

The word "artist" has been so much misapplied, that one scarcely dares use it in its former laudatory sense to praise a man. Henri Regnault was an artist. He

possessed the *gift*, lacking which the most persevering labour results but in mediocrity; he had imagination, fire, boldness, and the capacity for discovering at the first glance the novel and individual character of things which was invisible to all others. He was by nature, temperament, and turn of mind a learned painter, and, in addition, a man of the world and of good family who made a name long illustrious and splendid in science blaze in the firmament of art. Like Géricault he understood and loved horses, and was a great rider — as was well proved by his equestrian portrait of General Prim. The bold way in which he seated riders upon restive and unruly horses made one shudder and seemed to foretell that he would die a violent death. A passionate lover of music, nature had endowed him, as her beloved child, with the needless gift of a lovely tenor voice that to any other man would have been worth a hundred thousand francs a year.

Henri Regnault was of medium height, rather supple and muscular than athletic. The Parisian climate had not yet deprived his olive complexion of the sunburn he had gained in the hot countries. His features, pleasant and engaging, rather than classically regular, were lighted up by a pair of brown eyes; his black hair fell

in curling ringlets over his low, broad, masterly brow, a regular brow of antiquity. A fine beard and whiskers framed in and completed a face that led the least observant to say, even though they did not know he was Regnault, "That man must be somebody."

We began to talk about Spain and Morocco, and, while chatting, Regnault, seated on the side of the bed — the Western divan — in my room where often there are not chairs enough for my visitors, was playing with my little Havana poodle that had at once perceived he was fond of animals. He was describing Tangier, in the way painters have of making every word tell, and using them with a touch at once accurate and significant. One of the pictures created by the artist's words has remained in my memory like a brilliant water-colour sketch done on the spot. It was a line of low houses with flat terraces, like blocks of chalk, with an intensely blue sky for a background. Above the terraces were outlined in strange and startling fashion the necks of camels, their bodies concealed by the houses in the foreground. These necks moving forward of themselves with the familiar swaying of the humped animal that is described by the periphrase "the ship of the desert," had the most fantastic and unreal aspect im-

aginable. Regnault's brief description gave me a perfect view of that street in Tangier, and for a few moments, in the depths of our Paris winter, I felt myself plunged in the warm atmosphere of the East. A sudden burst of sunlight was projected on the wall, as in the paintings of Decamps or Pieter de Hoogh.

After diverse meanderings, the talk fell upon Goya. It so happened that I had in my room a superb copy of the *Estragos y desastres de la guerra* which Philippe Burty, who owns all things that are beautiful in the most perfect condition, had lent to me. The album was placed on the table, and Regnault, who had seen some plates from it in Spain, but not the complete work, which it is difficult to find, began to look through it, reading out the short inscriptions, ironical or sinister, written at the foot of the etchings often in pencil, for most of the plates are proofs before letters. He stopped at one that represented a house smashed in by a shell, the floors falling in, and carrying with them, head down, a mother pressing her babe to her breast, the *criada*, and the husband, pell-mell with the shattered furniture — a subject that was ere long to become for us terribly topical, and which the Spanish painter has rendered in that mingled realistic and imaginative style

which is characteristic of him. Regnault admired the boldness of the foreshortening of the parts seen from below and the strange grace which the artist manages to endow women with, even in the midst of utmost horrors. He also noted the wonderfully noble pose of the young married woman, who is kneeling and being shot to death with her whole family, her grandmother, her babe, the nurse, and the servants. The poor devils strangled by the garrote, their navaja hanging from their neck, and bearing on their breast these words, "For a knife," attracted his attention, but he dwelt longest upon a plate of grandiose and sinister effect: a battle-field strewn with dead bodies, being examined in attitudes of despair, by an old man and an old woman whose face is heavily shadowed by her hood; no doubt a father and a mother seeking their son among the dead. A sombre sky, with a band of livid light on the horizon, stretches over this scene of desolation like a funeral pall edged with silver. At the bottom is the terribly laconic inscription: *Enterrar y callar* — "Bury and be silent," a maxim intended for the conquered, the appositeness of which comes home to us. The young artist remained silent for a time before turning the page. Did he have a vague presentiment of his own fate?

Then he lightly shook his curly head, and went on looking over the collection. The amazing nightmare that uprises in a whirl of fantastic and hideous larvæ, the grimaces of all the illusions of life, a skeleton with a few bits of flesh yet adhering to its bones, emerging partly from its half-opened grave, and tracing upon a paper with its clawlike finger the single word *nada* — nothing — as a piece of information from the other world, suggested to him a number of reflections upon Goya's peculiar fancy. Ten having struck, which is a late hour on a siege evening, he rose and took leave, after having cordially shaken hands with his friend Clairin and the comrade who had brought them both to see me.

This first interview, in which I was charmed by the amiable simplicity of his manners, his natural wit, and the sense of superiority which one felt in his presence, was also the last I had with Regnault; I never saw him again and never can see him again. I made his acquaintance just in time to lose him, and just enough to increase the bitterness of my regret. I have to mourn the friend as well as the great artist, for we had already become friends at the end of the couple of hours we had spent together. I felt it to be so, and,

now a whole valuable future of sympathetic intercourse is closed to me.

Had Henri Regnault lived, I should not have mentioned these small private details that would have had no interest under the circumstances, but I am sure I shall be forgiven for having drawn, after a single interview, the silhouette of that amiable face that has vanished for ever.

Assuredly in the course of the disastrous times we have been going through, there have been many irreparable deaths, and losses that will make hearts bleed unceasingly: there have been made many blanks that will not be filled for many a day, many a name will not be heard in answer to the roll-call, and it is true that when given for the country, the life of the most obscure man is of as great worth as the life of the most illustrious; nevertheless it may be said that the severest loss entailed upon us by the siege has been the death of Regnault. In spite of his mad bravery, he had escaped the dangers of the defence, and fell on the supreme day in front of the fatal wall at Buzenval, killed by the last of the Prussian bullets — a cruel piece of refinement on the part of the evil fate which pursues us.

HENRI REGNAULT

With Henri Regnault disappears the possibility of a new future for painting. Had the young master lived longer, the face of art might have been modified or changed. In the world of colour and form he had opened up hitherto unperceived vistas and prospects. Tone relations, unnoticed by painters, were plain to the eyes of this wondrously endowed artist who possessed, to use Swedenborg's expression, the gift of "correspondence." He saw the very soul of colour where others beheld but the body of it, and he was able to recognise the secret affinities of shades under what appeared to be dissimilar. He brought out the individual and personal characteristics of subjects, drawing them out in full relief and showing them in a novel and out-of-the-way light, without destroying their charm, as the painters of the Romanticist school too frequently did. No one understood better than he did the exotic seduction of barbaric picturesqueness or had penetrated more deeply into the understanding of the ideal of the Orient.

No definitive judgment can be passed on the work of an artist who was stopped in his first strides, even though these were like unto those of the gods in Homer who reached the ends of the world in four of them; but since the day when, in competition for the Roman

scholarship, he had painted "Thetis bringing the arms to her son Achilles," a work already so remarkable for the delicacy and refinement of the colouring, Regnault had made immense progress. The portrait of the "Lady in Red," standing out from a background formed of a red curtain, the equestrian portrait of General Prim, the delightful little portrait of a "Duchess in Pink," the "Judith slaying Holophernes," and the "Salome," in the last Salon, proved how great a master was the young fellow, not twenty-seven years old, who was yet a student at the Villa Medici. Never had a more striking and incontestably original genius revealed itself so suddenly to the public. Every one of his paintings, admired and criticised, had aroused the sensation always caused by remarkable works that necessarily contain something of "that shocking beauty" which alarms routine. Regnault's name had become famous: he was the event of the season; his influence was already making itself felt, and he would soon have impelled art in a new direction.

His last work, which is also his masterpiece, "An Execution without Trial under the Moorish Kings of Granada," having reached too late the exhibition of works sent by the students in the French art school

at Rome, was seen there but for a few days, and was seen but by a small number of persons, for the disasters of the war were already engrossing all minds. The work, so amazingly bold and so startlingly effective, failed to make much of a sensation, and I may therefore reprint in this place, as an unpublished document, the following portion of an article which appeared on September 8, 1870, and in which will be seen the effect produced upon me, told with all the warmth of the moment, by the last work Regnault was to paint: —

"A white marble stairway, comprising a few steps, forms the foreground of the picture, of which it occupies the full breadth. It leads to a hall of Arabic architecture, in the style of the Hall of the Abencerrages or the Hall of *las dos Hermanas* in the Alhambra at Granada, the vaulting fretted with arabesques and honeycombings. The whole of the background blazes with a reflected light that tells of brilliant sunshine and great heat outside. This lovely place, where has just been carried out a sinister deed, seems to be plunged in profound silence; it is, as it were, filled with the solitude and the mystery of the seraglio. The crime and the chastisement will alike remain ignored once the mutes shall have borne away the body and washed up the

blood. No eye has seen, no ear has heard aught; the victim and the executioner were alone together. The head that has just fallen was perchance one of the fourteen that the Head of the Faithful has the right to cut off every day, without assigning any reason for his action; the head of a traitor, of a murderer, or of a sacrilegious person whose crime must not be revealed.

"The head, separated from the trunk, has rolled down the stair, the body writhing in the last agony and seen foreshortened. By the body, a few steps higher up, stands the executioner who is wiping the blade of his sword. Such, briefly, is the outline of the composition.

"The Justicer, for the name of executioner cannot fairly be given to the noble and majestic figure, is a very dark complexioned Moor, wearing a red fez, under which shows the edge of a white skull-cap, and having on no other garment than a gandourah, or long gown, of a faded rose-colour, a discoloured, wan, dead rose like that of a dried leaf, and extraordinarily harmonious. The gandourah, open above, allows to be seen a strongly built chest and mighty pectoral muscles that testify to remarkable strength. With a superb gesture, he is slowly passing his Damascus *flittah* upon

the partially lifted fold of his robe, lighted by reflected light from below, and tinted with an orange luminous hue against which shows the lower portion of his muscular brown legs. Turning his head aside somewhat, he casts from his loftier position, upon the fallen body, an undefinable glance, at once contemptuous and sad, of gentle and dreamy ferocity, filled with Oriental fatalism: 'It was written!' but absolutely devoid of anger or indignation.

"On the contrary, powerless rage and furious hatred are visible in the glance which the severed head casts back at the living one. The mouth is twisted convulsively, the features are contracted in hideous fashion, and the bluish tones of the shaven skull impart to the head a strange and awesome look. The body of the victim has slipped down the steps, and his arms, thrown back, half conceal the stump of the neck whence spurts the blood that spreads out in red pools upon the whiteness of the marble. This spot of red, incredibly rich in colour, is the tonic note, the dominant of the painting. In this place the blood has spurted out fiercely, splashing over the steps; there it spreads out more; farther on, it is flowing in long streamlets or coagulating in thick drops. It is unimaginably true;

the young artist must have seen a beheading with a yataghan in Tangier, and it might even be thought it was a sight of that sort which suggested to him the idea of this painting.

"To place such a great splash of blood in the centre of his work is a rare piece of resolute audacity, but horror in this case is not synonymous with disgust. From the point of view of art it is a beauty. As I looked upon the splendid tones, I thought of Homer's comparison of blood flowing like purple skeins upon Menelaus' ivory thighs, and Alfred de Musset's line—

'And stained thy marbles with their blood, O Paros!'

came back to my mind, just as the splendid gesture of the Justicer had recalled to me the avenging angel 'wiping his blade on the clouds' in the closing lines of 'Ratbert.'"

With reference to the "Execution without Trial," in which the dominating note is a blood-stain, M. Paul de Saint-Victor has pointed out that the subjects selected by our young artist are usually ferocious and sanguinary: Judith and Holophernes, Salome, holding in her lap the basin in which is to fall the head of the Baptist, the mysterious Beheading on the steps

of the Alhambra — in all these brilliant works death has enwrapped itself in the magnificent carelessness of the East, and murder is done amid all the splendours of the palette, in the shimmering of gold, brocade, and gems.

I may be allowed to point to a singular coincidence which accords with the meaning that Regnault's death has attached to this choice of funereal subjects: General Prim was killed by a gun-shot a few days before the artist who had painted a portrait of him that Velasquez might have signed. The model preceded the painter to a bloody grave by but a short time.

As for us who are left, we have the bitter regrets and the thoughts of that wondrous bloom cut off, of that great future that has been destroyed. Henri Regnault has lived long enough, however, for he leaves three or four masterpieces, and his fame is assured. He began as a genius, and died like a hero.

XIV

THREE UNPUBLISHED WATER-COLOURS

MARCH, 1871.

WHEN the life of an artist has been cut short as suddenly as poor Regnault's, after the bringing forth of a few brilliant works that suffice to make him famous, one eagerly seeks out every luminous trace of his passage he may have left, in the way of sketches, drawings, water-colours, bits, germs of future thought, with the view of restoring, in imagination, so promising a talent. But for that last cartridge he was bound to use up, but for his fatal turning back towards the enemy's lines when the retreat had sounded, Regnault would have had many a year in which to produce, for his was a robust nature and an energetic character, though mayhap a somewhat adventurous one. He would have made his full worth known, he would have exercised a legitimate influence, and critics would not be reduced to indulge in æsthetic

conjectures as to the direction he would have made art follow. But he has vanished like a meteor that long dazzles the eye; for him there is no future, and the past alone exists. The final date has been inscribed in black letters upon the white stone.

I have been favoured with a view of the last works executed by his bold and swift hand, the ready tool of his prompt will. They are three large water-colours, done between one reconnaissance and another, between a going on and a coming off guard, since the time the artist left Tangier. It would naturally be supposed that the young painter, excited by the spectacle of war, which was new to him, reproduced some episode in the fights in which he had taken part so actively and so brilliantly; yet this is not the case. Modern war, carried on by mathematical means, unornamented weapons, ugly uniforms, and settled evolutions, could have but little picturesque attraction for Regnault, who was in love with Oriental colour and fancifulness. Thus it was that, through an operation of the mind easy to follow, his imagination carried him back to the land of light. The gray heavens, the ground, muddy or glazed with livid snow against which stood out the silhouettes of the combatants, the smoke of

powder mingling with the fog, did not offer tones rich enough for his glowing palette. It is possible that if he had lived longer the poetry of such sombre and gloomy effects would have impressed itself upon him and inspired him with a subject for a wonderful sketch. But the feeling of duty, hatred of the invader, chivalrous courage, and the all-powerful attraction of danger, to which Regnault was peculiarly sensible, alone filled his mind at that time when the artist in him disappeared in the citizen. A few notes found on his person after the battle testify to his manly and firm resolve on this point; he had accepted all the consequences of the sacrifice he had made.

It seems as though sinister omens had been meant to foretell the young artist's heroic and violent death. A broad splash of blood fills up the centre of his last picture, and the subject of his first water-colour is a head that has been cut off, — a study made in the dissecting-room and recalling Géricault's fine anatomical fragments. Straightway, without the least hesitation, without any preliminary groping, Regnault, who had never dipped his brush in the glass of water-colour painters, had assimilated all the resources of that art with marvellous rapidity of intuition, had enlarged

them and forced them to serve him. It is well known that it is extremely difficult to paint a life-size head in water-colours. Now this study, which might have been made for the purpose of painting a "Descent from the Cross" or an "Entombment," is washed in in tones that are vigorous although kept within the scale of death tints, and took the artist but two hours to complete. The close-cut hair, the mustaches, and the small tuft give a military look to the head cut off by the assistant. Similar ones are to be seen in the foregrounds of battle scenes.

These splendid water-colours take us clean into the Orient. They appear to have been painted under the changeless African sky, and not under the gloomy pall of mists that lowered over Paris during the months the siege was going on. The first of the three water-colours I am examining represents a young woman lying on a divan, dressed in a costume composed chiefly of white transparent stuffs with opaque stripes. All this whiteness produces the effect of the camellia surrounded with different flowers that is placed in the centre of a ball bouquet; they draw and concentrate the light, and their brilliancy spreads in soft undulations upon the brighter surrounding hues. The woman her-

self, half lying down in a pose rendered more supple by the languor of the kief, recalls the lovely Haoua, whose exquisite portrait Fromentin has drawn in "A Year in the Sahel," with a literary skill that equals his talent as a painter. It is impossible to admire too much the astonishing harmony of the stuffs, the carpets, the accessories, of colours apparently disparate, but the contrast of which melts into perfect accord. No painter, since Eugène Delacroix painted his "Women of Algiers," has cast more limpid shadows over the shimmering of a rich Moorish interior.

The subject of the second water-colour is also an interior, but wholly different in meaning and values. On a divan covered with brocade, silk, or morocco leather cushions, is seated, or rather is squatting, a young man, bare to the belt, almost as dark as a mulatto, and resting his arm on his knee with a movement at once most bold and skilful. It is a strange figure. A sort of carelessly wound turban covers his brow with its broad folds and casts mysterious shadows over his eyes. He looks like an Eastern Manfred or Don Juan who has perchance been acquainted with some other civilisation, and has sought a new experience in his weariness. As I looked on that frame,

spare, muscular, consumed by passion, I thought of Hassan, the hero of Alfred de Musset's "Namouna," who, exchanging the cigar for hasheesh, had repaired to the Land of the Sun to impart some warmth to his scepticism. It is not likely that the artist had this in mind, but his water-colour does suggest the notion: the weariness of voluptuousness, the longing for the unknown, the lassitude of artificial paradises, as Baudelaire called them, are visible on his worn face, still youthful in spite of the excesses he has indulged in.

On the thick carpets that cover the floor is stretched out a young woman, who, leaning her shoulders against the divan, and dressed in a black gandourah with hood, half opened on the bosom, of a whiteness recalling the moon emerging from behind a cloud, is nonchalantly touching the cords of a guzla with her henna-tinted fingers as she accompanies herself. The song issues sigh-like from her inattentive lips; she feels that she is not being listened to, and is following out her dream. Wide apart indeed are these two beings, both young and beautiful, who are placed at each end of a divan.

In spite of the violence of the tones maintained in the shadow with a superb mastery of colour, the luxury

that surrounds them is dulled in its richness, marked by sombre ardour and has something of a funereal seriousness. It is a wealth of curtains and portières made of stuffs wrought by the most perfect art of the Orient, magnificent tissues, Smyrna, Kabylia, or Turkey carpets, trays inlaid with mother-of-pearl, arms studded with gems, Khorassan narghilés, and yet there is something tragical in all that mass of splendour. The room might well be the scene of a mad fit of jealousy or of a murder, and blood would not show upon the sombre purple carpets.

The third water-colour is a mere palette bouquet, a mystic nosegay of Oriental colours that have bloomed out in a beam of light. It represents a cadi's wife or an odalisque standing in the centre of her room and apparently enchanted with her beauty and the sheen of her costume. And it has been dashed off with incomparable freshness and limpidity; the painter, while utilising the happy chances of water-colours, has kept to his purpose.

I must also mention a few most clever and truthful pencil portraits, especially one of a young girl on horseback, extremely elegant, which testifies to aptitudes in the young artist that remind one of Géricault.

This is what he has left behind him, but through his friend, Clairin, we have been made aware of what he proposed to do and what he was about to execute: a sort of personification and triumph of Islam in the times of the Caliphs of Spain. He had built in Tangier an immense studio with a view to carrying out his project. The canvas was to be thirty-three feet long, and proportionately high — something after the style of one of Paolo Veronese's great banquets — and it was already in course of preparation.

Before starting upon a picture, Regnault, thanks to his rapid intuition, saw it in its completed state, and described it with great fulness of detail, resembling in this respect the crazy characters in Hoffmann and Balzac, who saw on a white canvas a masterpiece invisible to other spectators. But there was this difference between him and Master Frenhofer and the painter of "The Court of Artus," that his canvas was speedily covered with splendid colour and the subject appeared just as if a veil had been torn apart.

The background of the picture was to be filled with a palace adorned with all the wonders of Arab architecture: slender pillars, heart-shaped arches, panels of lace-work wrought out in stucco, niches with painted

and gilded stalactites, inscriptions from the Koran in Cufic characters mingled with flowers, and overlaid azulejos; in a word, a summary of the Alhambra at Granada and the Alcazar at Seville: fountains splashing in basins of ribbon alabaster, tall vases in which grew rare flowers, all the fairy marvels that the East accumulates in the palace of the Caliphs. In the centre opened out a great archway, its cedar gates forming complicated symmetries miraculously worked out and inlaid with silver. To this superb archway led a broad stair of white marble, the lower steps of which were laved by the waters of a stream. A gilded galley with quaint prow and poop, its striped carpets and draperies dipping in the current, brought to the foot of the steps the tributary chiefs, the vassals from Africa and Spain, dressed in brilliant armour, starred with rubies and turquoises, draped in velvet, brocade, silks, and fine white woollens, splendent with gold and silver under a flood of light.

On the steps of the stair stood groups of slaves, prisoners and captive females of every race, some half nude, others disappearing partly under the quivering, sparkling shimmer of golden gauze rayed with a sunbeam, beauteous as Judith, weird as Salome, to say

nothing of the new types discovered or dreamt of by the artist. Add to all this coffers inlaid with mother-of-pearl, from which stream strings of pearls, perfume-burners in filigree work, cups filled with dinars and tomaums, silver vases, jasper ewers, dishes of Balearic earthenware, iridescent with all the colours of the rainbow, floods of stuffs, embroidered, striated, laminated with gold or silver wire, saddles and harness bossy with gold, quantities of weapons more precious than gems, flowers that would make the nightingale unfaithful to the rose, pigeons, their necks ringed with diamonds, gazelles gazing with wide-eyed amazement, and you will have some idea of what Regnault intended to paint.

In the centre of the picture, through the half opened doors, was seen in a transparent penumbra, like an idol within its temple, the Emir El Mumenim, receiving the tribute and the homage, impassible and apparently unnoticing.

This mysterious figure, which was to secure the unity of the composition by centring in itself the display of luxury and splendour, made me think, as Clairin described it from Regnault's account, of the superhumanly abstracted attitude of Sultan Abdul-Medjid

during the ceremony of the Courban Beïram, when the Court dignitaries came to kiss the end of his sash fastened to one of the arms of his throne.

Alas! Regnault's marvellous dream will never be realised, but as I closed my eyes, I fancied I could see it, with the poet's inner vision, radiant in its great gilded frame on the walls of the Great Room in the coming Exhibition.

XV

VICTOR GIRAUD

FEBRUARY, 1871.

THESE are days of painful surprises, and one scarcely dares open the paper for fear of learning of some new loss. The sad presentiment rarely deceives one: there was a friend, not seen for some weeks past, believed to be alive and well and to have escaped the perils of war; whose name had not appeared in the death lists. Unhappily it is not so; you learn of his death, before being apprised of his illness, by a black-bordered letter, and your grief is increased by the sorrow of not having had the opportunity of pressing the wan hand a last time. You were just returning from a funeral, and with eyes still wet you have again to take the road to the cemetery, ill yourself, your heart bleeding, and wondering you have survived.

It is not bullets and shells only that kill. A heroic death amid the smoke of battle and the intoxication of the

fight is not granted to every one. The bitterly cold nights spent standing in the snow, in the icy north wind, on the ramparts, while on guard, have claimed more victims than the enemy's fire. How many, wounded unto death by the frozen darts, have passed away silently in their deserted homes, far from their families, and without glory to console their last moments by placing the sacred star upon their breast, from which the last breath is issuing. If they have not been fortunate enough to fall like soldiers on the field of battle, they, unknown martyrs to duty, have none the less given up their lives. Though their blood has not flowed, though their death is ascribed to pneumonia or bronchitis, the fatherland is bound to be equally grateful to them for their sacrifice. All the losses cannot be reckoned up, because the battle is over, and more than one who seemed to have been spared, has lain down, ill, worn out, exhausted, not again to rise. Of these was Victor Giraud.

He was the son of Eugène Giraud. In that family, as in Vernet's, every one was a painter; Charles, Eugène's brother, is himself a very good painter of interiors, but the one who appeared destined to make the name most luminous and glorious was Victor. He

was richly endowed by nature, and he had added experience to his gifts by labour that was more and more persevering. Although he has been cut off in the very flower of his age, at thirty, he had time to show his worth and to cause men to regret the artist as well as the man. I knew him quite young, when scarcely more than a child, and the friendship which bound me to his father, whom I met so often in my years of travel in Spain, Turkey, and elsewhere, had naturally been continued with the son, whose progress I watched with peculiar interest. It was a pleasure to me to watch the development and growth of his talent between one exhibition and the next, a talent that had already given serious pledges to the present and on which the future might reckon safely. I used to meet him in the evening in society or at first performances of a play, for after the labour of the day and the silence of the studio, he liked to enjoy the blaze of lights, the elegance and the movement of life. He was interested in matters intellectual and was better up in dramatic matters than many a professional critic. He was a handsome young fellow, with an abundance of thick fair hair, falling upon his forehead, a curly beard, regular, well cut features, cast in an antique mould and recalling the bust

of Lucius Verus. He had the look of strength in slightness, although in reality, in spite of his great pectoral muscles, his chest was delicate.

Yet no one could have foreseen so sad and so swift an end to a life begun under the happiest auspices and on which heaven seemed to smile. One night, on the ramparts, he caught cold, during a turn of duty lighted by the icy and deadly moonlight reflected by the snow. He fought the disease as long as he could, for in such times as these, illness appears to be a sort of desertion and the refuge of skulkers, a thing unbearable to a proud and generous mind, but the malady proved the stronger and he was compelled to forsake the camp-bed for the death couch.

In his nights of suffering, when the delirium of fever began to make his thoughts wander, the poor artist would murmur: "Lucky fellow, Regnault, for he at least was killed by a bullet!" It was the noble envy of the dying, worthy to be admired; but death has its favourites and gives them for funeral crown a laurel wreath.

Art has richly paid its debt to the fatherland in this fatal war. Its dearest sons have fallen in the flower of their age, full of boldness, genius and fire, and the

future of painting has perchance thus been compromised for a long time. A new school was growing up in succession to the Romanticist school, deeply in love with colour, thinking of yet undreamt-of combinations and contrasts of tones, and looking at nature in an individual and striking way. Without seeking to imitate Regnault or Fortuny, the Spanish painter who refused to exhibit his pictures, but who is none the less well known to artists, Victor Giraud was himself working in the same direction. Like Goethe, he had a theory of colours which is most fully set out in his painting called "The Charmer," one of the most noteworthy in the last Salon. Every one is acquainted with the subject of it: an Egyptian bird-charmer is making his little charges perform their tricks in presence of an assemblage of patrician ladies and handsome young Romans in a gallery embellished with rare plants, Greek vases, and decorative paintings. The figures were life-size, and the women exhibited all the refinements of the *mundus muliebris*, which has called forth so many invectives from moralists and satirical poets. These female types, of a delicate beauty heightened by the artifices of the coquetry of antiquity, had the expression of deep satiety, aristocratic disdain, and frivolous per-

versity that is characteristic of periods of decadence. It can readily be understood how fully the young painter turned to account the gems, the head-dresses, the tunics, the embroideries, and all the sheen and discord of a luxury which he had harmonised by an ingenious use of conciliating tones, after the manner of the Orientals, who avoid the collocation of uncongenial colours by means of a mere thread of silver or gold.

"The Slave Dealer," treated in historical proportions, had proved most successful at one of the previous Salons. It was remarkable for the understanding of exotic types which was one of the artist's qualities. An admirable subject for a painter was that young sated patrician, in search of the impossible, to whom are being shown young maids from every land and of every hue, from the white marble of the Greek to the tawny bronze of the Abyssinian. Victor Giraud had treated it in most brilliant fashion, with his characteristic feeling for composition, exquisite and uncommon colouring, and marvellous dexterity of execution. It was antique, but freer, easier, and as it were rejuvenated and renovated by modern intelligence, as in André Chénier's works.

Nor is forgotten that tragic scene in costumes of the

days of the Directory, in which a jealous husband killed his wife's lover on the stairs, while she fell fainting adown the balusters, with a movement inspired by that of Kitty Bell on learning of Chatterton's death, in Alfred de Vigny's play. This singularly bold painting greatly preoccupied public attention.

Now his work is interrupted; the palette has fallen from Victor Giraud's dying hand. His memory will be kept green by three or four pictures; Regnault himself has not left many more. Fate was miserly of life to them, but they made good use of it, and though struck down so young, both managed to find time to prove their worth and to let us guess how many plans and ideas for future work they had.

The other day, Tuesday, February 21, on Shrove-Tuesday! — for chance indulges at times in a bitter irony that seems the result of set purpose on the part of a diabolical wickedness, — the portal of Saint-Philippe du Roule was draped in black. A silver "G" shone upon the funereal drapery, and the friends of the deceased, old and young, worn thin by famine, crawled towards the church like spectres.

I stood close by the catafalque under which lay him whom I had known, but a few months before, young,

handsome, smiling, and beloved; and at that time had any one said to me: "It is you who will sprinkle holy water upon his coffin," I should have made a gesture of negation and doubt.

"The young are in a hurry, the young march first,"

says Victor Hugo, the great poet, and I could not help repeating the line between the responses of the liturgy. The candles were burning at the back of the choir, draped in mourning, like faint stars against a black sky; the priests, wearing dalmatics with silver crosses, were performing the sacred rites with slow gestures, while the voices of the boy choristers rose to heaven colourless, shrill, and sharp like the prelude to "Lohengrin." At times the deep base of the organ uttered low lamentations, stifled sighs of the soul, sobs of grief that will not be soothed. The effect would have been depressing but that now and then a winged note soared luminous over the sadness and told of hope and immortality.

At the elevation of the host the rolling of muffled drums suddenly broke out with deep, deadened sound, a virile expression of military sorrow and respect, that moved all hearts and caused many a tear to flow from

eyes that had till then refused to weep. It was his brothers in arms bidding farewell to their comrade.

For my part, while I mourned bitterly over this latest death, an old wound, scarce healed and breaking open anew at the least touch, was bleeding in my heart.

The hemicycle that forms the end of the nave in Saint-Philippe du Roule, contains a "Calvary" as large as that by Tintoretto in the Scuola di San Rocco, a work full of genius and feeling, intense in its melancholy, due to my dear and ever regretted Théodore Chasseriau, whose death has not been sufficiently felt, although high art deplores it and declares it to be irreparable. He also died very young, at the age when died Raphael and Lord Byron. Gustave Moreau, the painter of "Œdipus," has represented the apotheosis of the young genius he loved and understood in a painting filled with funereal and penetrating charm, entitled "The Youth and Death." Alas! it is in vain that, as one advances in life and the companions of one's youth fall by the wayside, one has friends among those who might be one's sons! They die before you, and you have to follow them to the grave.

After having pressed old Giraud's hand — he was called old Giraud to distinguish him from his son —

pressed it silently, for what is there to say to a father borne down by so great a grief? I slowly took my way homewards through the Champs-Élysées, weighed down by deep despair and sadness. From time to time sounds hoarse, choking, and painful as the death-rattle struck on my ears; they were produced by a couple of poor wan, ragged children who were blowing cowherds' horns, purchased, no doubt, with money obtained by begging.

Doleful indeed is the sound of these earthen horns, called, I know not why, "the Carnival's joyous summons," and which would be more in place in a funeral procession. Yes, it was the last week before Lent, and the two street-Arabs, not well informed on the situation of things, but acquainted with the traditions of the Carnival, were trying to celebrate Shrove-Tuesday in their own way, and with the best intentions in the world, I feel sure, for the street-Arab is a patriot. They soon noticed the ill effect produced by their discordant notes in the silence and mourning of the city; they blew more softly, as if afraid of the noise they were making, and ended by putting their horns in their pockets.

XVI

GUSTAVE DORÉ

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SIEGE

IT would be a mistake to suppose that the progress of art was stayed during the course of the serious events we have just witnessed. I have already spoken of Falguière's snow statue, of Moulin's bust, modelled out of the same white stuff that covered the glacis of the ramparts, of Puvis de Chavanne's most touching and poetic compositions, and of the admirable water-colours in which poor Regnault seemed to be striving to warm himself in the sunshine of the East during the long icy cold hours of duty at the outposts, but I am far from having mentioned all that was done. Bracquemond, who handles the etcher's graver in so masterly a fashion, transferred to copper the novel aspects imparted by the defensive works to the approaches to the bastions and to the military zone, and which he had had full opportunity to observe during his numerous turns of duty. Many other names are

at present unknown, but will come to the light at the next exhibition.

An artist's mind works incessantly, even without his being aware of it, and in the middle of a fight he will note an effect which escapes others. Through his incessant communion with nature he develops a remarkable acuteness of perception which acts without volition on his part. He never loses sight of form and colour even in the rush of the fiercest engagement; his memory, accustomed to grasp lines, receives as it runs the ineffaceable reflection of things. Nor does this fact prevent his doing his duty to the full, being brave, a good comrade, and full of kindness. Should a brother in arms fall wounded, he carries him off from under fire, and shelters him behind a wall. But the attitude of the limp body, the pallor of the face, the lime on the wall, damaged by the shells, against which rests the head, the tone of the blood flowing over the snow or the grass, the relation between the earth and the sky at that particular moment, are reflected in his eyes as in an instantaneous photograph. As he watches the bursting of a shell he takes to wondering what combination of colours could render the sinister light. This peculiar tendency makes the artist wonderfully

fitted to preserve and reproduce the physiognomy of events at those crucial moments when the imminence of disaster leads the stoutest hearts to think only of defending themselves desperately. The artist takes part in the action, but at the same time he sees the spectacle. The slaughter, in the course of which death may come to him, — and Regnault's fate is there to prove it, — is a battle, no doubt, but it is also a picture.

Of course the decoration of public buildings, churches, and palaces, official and private commissions, and important works of illustration came to a stop during those days so sombre and uncertain when the most obstinate to hope could not, unless they were demented, count on seeing the morrow. Each artist, resigning himself to the scanty fare of the siege and reckoning on no remunerative profit, freely indulged his own individual fancy, noting down whatever had struck him and rendering it with fullest sincerity, totally forgetful of the public, that itself was given over to other preoccupations. Thus it is that Gustave Doré, not absorbed this year in illustrating handsome books in gilt and tooled covers, which his inexhaustible fancy enriches, has turned out great epic compositions, reproduced by photography, in which the artist, mingling

reality and allegory, has represented the invasion, the call to arms, the resistance, and other kindred subjects.

But any one who should suppose that Doré was satisfied with doing this cannot be acquainted with him. His fecund imagination, served by prodigious technical skill, constantly urges him to series of new works. Although he has times of dreamy or contemplative idleness, prolonged repose would be wearisome to him. Therefore it was that I shrewdly guessed that in the intervals between one turn of duty and another he must have done enough himself to fill a whole exhibition; so, profiting by the privilege to be indiscreet, conferred upon me by a friendship already of long standing — for Doré made his début so young — I made my way into the artist's studio, closed at present, while he is in England where he is receiving a most sympathetic welcome, and I saw I was not mistaken.

Upon easels, placed in the best light, along the wall, but most of them with their faces turned to it, were, in every corner of the great room, great cartoons and canvases in various stages of progress, all connected by their subjects with the same line of thought and appearing to form the epic and picturesque cycle of the first

siege. Above these rose in tiers, and richly framed, paintings by the young master, representing strange and grim characters, and a few of those Alpine landscapes, so brilliantly blooming and so intense in colour, in which the setting sun casts roses upon the whiteness of the mountain summits.

The tranquil sanctuary of art had had a narrow escape recently. On the terrace, filled with flowers, on which Doré is wont to take his walks, the artillerymen of the Commune, who care but little for painting, wished to set up a battery, which would have drawn a return fire undoubtedly, to the great detriment of the paintings and drawings; happily this dangerous fancy was not carried out.

One of the drawings that first attracted me went back to the beginnings of the siege, at the time when the line of investment was being drawn closer and closer, leaving but few gaps open. Vast flocks were hastening towards the city, and their biblical aspect recalled the migrations of nations fleeing from a celestial scourge. These flocks were intended to provide the city with food, the Gargantua city grown the larger on account of the fleeing suburbans who had taken refuge behind its walls, and when one looked at the

tumultuous hurrying on of all these animals destined to the slaughter-house, it might have been thought that the stock of meat would prove inexhaustible.

Gustave Doré's imagination was greatly struck by this sight, so strange and so novel to our civilisation, of a gigantic assemblage of cattle to which South America alone can furnish a parallel when prairie fires drive before them the bewildered hordes of buffaloes. The artist has shown us the multitude of rounded backs, of crescent horns, of broad quarters, pouring into the roads in the Bois de Boulogne like a resistless torrent, under an incessant storm of blows of sticks and in a whirlwind of dust. He has also shown us an army of sheep greater by far than that which the Knight of La Mancha described in such pompous terms to the amazed Sancho, taking it for the host of Miramolin; fleeces undulating as far as the eye can reach, like a sea of wool, in one of those landscapes Doré knows so well how to draw.

Who does not remember that unfortunate fashionable Bois de Boulogne, of yore the swell parade, transformed into a cattle-yard? Yet, after all, it was none the less beautiful, and when a great ox, raising its head with a look of astonishment and anxiety, crossed a deserted

drive and was soon followed by a few of its emboldened companions, the effect produced was quite picturesque. Gustave Doré's admirable drawing will preserve, for the benefit of posterity, this unique aspect of the Bois, which our descendants will hesitate to credit, adding to it a poetical feeling that fills out its truthfulness.

Another drawing displays the panorama of Paris, seen looking down from the plateau of the Montmartre hill, from the mill where were installed the powerful electric lights the beams of which, a livid white, searched the plain in the distance and with their sudden blaze revealed the manœuvres of the Prussians. The vast city, shrouded in smoke and dotted with luminous points faintly indicating in the shadowiness the monuments showing like promontories and reefs on the sea of houses, assumes a formidable and apocalyptic aspect; it looks like the Nineveh or Babylon seen by the prophet in his visions, and over which lowers the black pall of disaster.

One of these drawings has been worked up by the artist, who has got out of it a strikingly effective picture. It is night, and "the dim light that falls from the stars," as Corneille has said in a sublime bit of padding, just allows one to make out the name of the Rue Gay-

Lussac, inscribed upon the corner of a wall. The snow has covered the street with its white shroud, sinister in its whiteness, and bringing out the gloomy gray of the long walls that enclose the gardens, and the empty parts of the streets that end in open fields. In the sombre blue heavens glitter the silver dots like unto frozen tears that tell of an icy-cold night. A few fragments of shells, recently fallen, are strewn over the snow and add to the terror inspired by the darkness, the silence, the solitude, the dread of unpleasant rencounters, and the fear of sudden death that bursts out of the shadow, dazzling like lightning.

Yet there is a figure which casts a queer shadow on the wall as it travels slowly along the deserted street. It is that of a nun, young, delicate, apparently feeble, wasted by the famine due to the siege and the labour of mercy. She is carrying in her arms, wrapped up in a blanket, a sick or wounded child, already well grown, in order to shelter it under some roof less threatened by projectiles. And onwards she goes through the night teeming with peril, beholding in the darkness the Light of the World, drawing supernatural strength from her faith, and straightening herself up under the burden that was bearing her down.

The impression produced by this painting is profound, and the figure of the Sister gliding along the wall remains ineffaceably impressed upon the memory. One feels that the artist has seen what he has painted; he has assuredly met that holy woman on one of his night rounds, and his eye remembered, unconsciously, it may be, the lines of the group, the expression of the face of which he caught a glimpse, the breaking of the folds, the way the shadows were cast. On his return home he made a drawing first, and then the painting, and to the reproduction of the fact itself he added his own feeling. The result is that the nun who is traversing the Rue Gay-Lussac at night, with a sick child in her arms, under a hail of shells, may symbolise, and does symbolise, Christian charity and its unsuspected heroism.

The episode of the removal of the poorer households, leaving the quarters threatened at the time of the bombardment, suggests a flight from an inundation, a conflagration, or other unavoidable disaster. Chairs, tables, boxes, thin mattresses from which the flock is bursting, all the humble utensils indispensable in housekeeping, are piled up pell-mell, in a riot of queer corners, upon hand-barrows drawn, with outstretched necks

and feet slipping in the snow, by the most robust men in the company. The sick, laid out upon the piles of clothing and bundles, have a spectral look and the appearance of shrouded corpses. They are shivering in the icy wind, as cold as though they had already been touched by the finger that closes the eyes and seals the lips. The woeful procession looks like a migrating Indian tribe bearing away its old people wrapped in buffalo-skins; the women follow, pressing to their thin breasts their babes, whom they try to keep warm with a rag of a shawl, and dragging along, in addition, an older child clinging to their skirts. Other fugitives are going on bowed under the weight of a piece of furniture, and sinister and picturesque indeed is the line as it marches onwards in the darkness lit up by the livid reflection of the snow and the red glare of bursting shells.

A composition left almost in the form of a sketch, but to which the utmost finish could add nothing, so plainly is the feeling the artist wished to express felt in the disorder of strokes apparently made at hap-hazard, long kept me interested. The subject is the return of an ambulance after a battle outside the walls — at Champigny, on the Avron Plateau, or at Buzenval. A

haggard, wild-haired woman, erect as a spectre, with the fixed stare of madness in her eyes, is engaged in looking over the wounded with a lantern that blinds them with its sudden blaze. Their faces, wan, decomposed, convulsed by suffering, wrapped up in bandages and compresses, recall the dread faces evoked by Goya from the depths of his darksome etchings. The woman is seeking among the wounded her husband or her son, who is no doubt numbered with the dead, and as she comes up to each ambulance, she indefatigably resumes her examination.

Gustave Doré has not confined himself to reproducing merely the picturesque and episodical side of the siege. He has made drawings of the defensive works, of the installation of the forts, of the armament of the bastions, in a way to satisfy both engineers and painters. History might draw information from his grisaille cartoons, which are at once so accurate and so full of colour, as exact as a geometrical plan and as grandly effective as a mezzotint by Martin. In this series of studies, sketches, and compositions, done at a time when it seemed that all minds were whelmed by one only thought, Gustave Doré has proved that art is incompressible, and that there is no force extant that

can restrain its expansion. Under the fallen ruins of buildings and institutions, and between the blocks of stone smashed by the shells and blackened by fire, one green plant ever is the first to appear, and to bloom out in a brilliant flower: it is Art, immortal as Nature's self.

XVII

SAINT-CLOUD

MARCH, 1871.

I HAD been told that the Prussians had evacuated Saint-Cloud the night before, and yielding to a desire that was very natural after the long imprisonment during the siege, I started, expecting to meet with no hostile face and to find the landscape clear. But I had reckoned without our hosts. At the end of the Sèvres bridge of boats, which was crowded with waggons, I caught sight, and a most disagreeable surprise it was, of three leather helmets with brass spikes topping three clumsy soldiers of stout build, with big legs, big feet, big boots, on the hip a canvas haversack that reminded me of Bertrand's pockets in "Robert Macaire," and carrying their rifles on their shoulders with as much grace as if it had been the broom with which, not so long ago, they used to sweep our streets. Mine eyes had perforce to receive their odious silhouette, which I would willingly efface as one does a spoiled negative, and I passed on with a rush of inward

anger and hatred that was unfortunately powerless, and that my readers can sympathise with.

There were more of the fellows in the guard-house at the entrance to the park, one of the side gates to which stood open. The park was deserted and gloomy, and the only sound audible was that of trees being cut down. Most sinister is the sadness of places filled with remembrances of splendours and festivals. In them one feels falling drop by drop on one's heart the tears of things, for nature weeps. *Sunt lacrymæ rerum*, is Vergil's profoundly melancholy expression.

Nevertheless, this part of the park is not so denuded as might be supposed. Trees have been cut away to allow of a clear range of view, and to facilitate the firing of the batteries placed higher up on the reverse slope of the hill. But the general appearance is not greatly changed, and spring, which is approaching with its greenery, will conceal the cicatrices of the surviving trees and fill up the empty spaces.

The cascade, falling from its reservoir down the marble and rockery steps, and which is very properly admired of the Parisians, has apparently suffered no damage, and the waters will be able to play again

on Sundays, supposing the lead piping has not been stolen by our thrifty foes who never forget anything.

After climbing the slope down which the waters flow, and passing beyond the mason-work of the cascade, I entered upon a portion that has been laid waste with fury. Magnificent trees, two and three centuries old, the giants and patriarchs of the forest, sawn asunder at the foot, have fallen to the ground and lie with their crown of branches upon broken shrubbery and ruined terraces. These trunks, thus cut down, and showing a broad plane of light hue that recalls the tones of human flesh, have a tragical and solemn air. They look like altars whereon is to be sworn undying hatred, and by which is to be invoked Nemesis, the goddess of righteous vengeance.

Having crossed this space through broken stones, rocks, pieces of wood, débris, and refuse of all sorts, I reached the sward that led with a gentle slope from the château to the Lantern of Diogenes, of which no trace remains, and then I beheld with amazement the wreck of a building now scarcely recognisable. Through the openings of the windows, blackened by the flames, is seen the blue or the gray of the sky; the whole of the interior has fallen in. It is even difficult to make out,

upon the façade, the main divisions of the design; two bronze statues alone still stand on their pedestals, in front of the peristyle, like two conscientious sentinels whom it has been forgotten to relieve. The one represents Aurora standing on a small car and casting down flowers; the other a stupid-looking Hercules smashing, with a club that resembles a piece of firewood, the ever-growing heads of the hydra. The necks from which the heads have been cut off are pierced with small holes whence spurted jets of water, a proof that this Hercules once figured in some mythological fountain.

The destruction is thorough, and it is quite out of the question to restore the building, for what the shells have left undestroyed, the fire has finished up. The palace is entered by the vestibule, now open to the four winds of heaven, and obstructed with débris, charred beams, iron-work torn out and twisted, and fragments of marble, while the floors, that have fallen in, allow the interior arrangements to be seen as in an architectural section. The furnace pipes and the water pipes, broken in places or emerging from the walls, show like veins in the body of the building; occasionally a mantelpiece has been left clinging to the wall upon

a fragment of the flooring, producing a strange effect. The fury of the fire has evidently been directed, for no blind force can of itself attain to such perfection of ravage and disaster. It has plainly been the work of expert and practical incendiaries, who were carrying out orders to destroy.

In the interior of the court the destroyers have indulged their fancy: some of the statues have lost their heads, others their legs, arms, or eyes, and are scored with horrid cicatrices and reduced to the condition of shapeless trunks calcined like lime. Others again have been spared, Heaven knows why, and smile with the serene indifference of marble amid a scene of desolation rendered more lugubrious still by their own unharmed gracefulness. The glass in three of the great candelabra has remained absolutely intact, but such exceptions are rare, everything having been mutilated, smashed, ground to pieces with scientific wickedness, and if the marauders are let alone they will soon have utterly destroyed every vestige of the materials.

As I was leaving the place that had once been the palace of Saint-Cloud, sorely grieved at the barbarous ruin which Time had had nothing to do with, — for centuries are less destructive than man, — I noticed,

looking out of the buildings formerly containing the domestic offices, the sordidly and cruelly low faces of German Jews, with their greasy hair, their forked beards, their unhealthy complexions, descendants of Judas Iscariot and Shylock, quite capable of cutting off their pound of flesh when their note falls due, thieves' fences and murderer's helpers, traders in pillage, hooking out, with their dirty claws, the lumps of molten metal they found in the ashes. They had that look of animal satisfaction which may be observed in vultures that have gorged themselves to repletion.

I returned into the town of Saint-Cloud through a street the first houses in which did not appear to have suffered greatly from the bombardment and the fire; but it is the outer shell only that has been left standing, and if one looks through a half-opened door, there become visible a gaping void from roof to cellar, and the light playing through the cracks in the walls.

It is impossible, unless one has seen it with one's own eyes, to form any adequate conception of the extent of the destruction. Saint-Cloud should be preserved as a Pompeii of havoc, and people might come there to see what war means. The city is quite uninhabitable, and it seems to me that it is out of the

question to attempt to repair the ruins, for they would crash down at the least touch. The place would have to be razed to the ground and rebuilt from end to end after removing the débris. The streets that ascend towards the church are obstructed by stones, rubbish, beams, awnings, and iron gates torn from their fastenings, and through all this are being made narrow paths, but in many places one has to climb over the wreckage. Houses ripped up have poured out their entrails upon the highway and seem to be striving to stand up, like brave soldiers mortally wounded that will not let themselves fall to the ground; others, with smoke-blackened windows, are one huge crack, like the House of Usher, in Edgar Poe's sinister tale, only the crack extends from the ridge to the ground-floor; the hideous break is visibly widening, and it is plain that the two portions of the wall are about to fall apart and thunder to the earth. There is not a single roof to be seen anywhere; all have been smashed in by shells and devoured by fire. These sudden ruins have not the characteristics of ruins due to abandonment and the wear of time; the passing years have not yet cast over them their soft brown tones; nature has not made their disjointed courses gay with ivy and wild flowers; everything

about them is harsh, bare, violent; the broken plaster is a dead white; the fresh breaks in the stones are of a crude tone that hurts the eye as if it were a raw wound. It is the difference between murder and natural death; these dead, assassinated houses have a heart-rending look that can never be forgotten, and they call out for vengeance with every one of the bleeding lips of their wounds.

Owing to the mighty ruin of the façades, the interior of the houses is seen as it is shown at times on the stage in plays in which a double action is going on. In some of the rooms untouched by the conflagration are visible wall-papers with sprigs of flowers or diapers, chimneypieces with the andirons, family portraits hanging on the walls, a ewer of water upon a dressing-table, household crockery on the shelves of cupboards, mattresses ripped open, chairs placed by the fireside and marking the places of vanished guests, or a chest of drawers ready to fall into the void and kept up in the air by a freak of equilibrium. Innumerable little things tell of the home life in these houses that once were so full of brightness and happiness. I was even able to recognise a lithographed portrait of Louis-Philippe, in a varnished deal frame, still hanging in the third story

of a fallen-in house. Fragments of staircases, as in Piranesi's etchings, lead into emptiness; doors open out upon the heavens, and balconies remain sticking, in dangerous fashion, on dismantled and creviced façades, describing strange arabesques, which photographers, hooded in black like the bearers of the dead, and their heads bent over their apparatus, are engaged in taking.

A touching incident is the statuette of the Blessed Virgin in its little grated niche filled with bouquets and wreaths, which has escaped the flames. Of yore pious souls would have considered this, which is at least singular, due to a miracle, and such a belief is in no wise repugnant to my own views.

A number of the inhabitants were beginning to return to their homes, like ants returning to their ant-heap destroyed by a brutal foot. They were making their way through the accumulation of ruins, seeking the location of their former residences, clearing away the threshold and pushing open with difficulty the doors on which the Prussians had written, with a coal snatched from the conflagration of Saint-Cloud, "No Admission." Housekeepers were drawing water from a pillar-fountain half buried under a heap of rubbish, the overflow from which filtered down between

the stones. This feeble attempt at the resumption of life in the dead city was touching in its way. A little green herb of hope was already sprouting on the ruins left by the barbarians.

The sight of the destruction wrought there impresses one with the conviction that it was coolly and methodically carried out. Brigades of incendiaries must have set fire to one house after another with petroleum and torches. A few, four or five at most, are untouched, and on the shutters of one of these may be read, in German: —

THIS HOUSE IS NOT TO BE TOUCHED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

January 28, 1871
Jacobi, *Major General*

On the right and the left everything has been destroyed and burned down.

I was overcome with fatigue and grief, and I started in the direction of the boat by means of which I had to cross the Seine, the bridge having been destroyed. The "Tête-Noire" hotel, at the corner of the Place d'Armes, has been wrecked by shells, and it will be long before boating parties land at it for their jolly meals.

SAINT-CLOUD

On reaching the other bank, I looked round: Saint-Cloud, with its roofless houses and its ruins of a death-like whiteness, resembled a vast cemetery over which rose a funereal chapel; the church, which alone was spared, was watching over the cadaver of the city.

XVIII

THE MODERN BARBARIANS

MAY, 1871.

DURING the second siege of Paris the Place d'Armes at Versailles had a grim and startling aspect: military life had taken up its abode in the midst of civil life, and the white cones of the tents stood out bright against the dark background of the houses bordering upon that vast space, so empty in ordinary times, and apparently incapable of ever being filled up. Bluish smoke rose from the improvised fires made between a couple of bricks, on which the soldiers were cooking in the open air, resorting to the primitive methods which man need no longer make use of in our advanced stage of civilisation. Under the trees of the Avenue de Saint-Cloud were lines of horses, having no shelter other than the foliage, and shivering in the morning air like mustangs on the American prairies. Their masters were sleeping near them on a little straw, wrapped up in their cloaks or their blankets, springing

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faint murmur of its remembrances of by-gone days. Yet the sight had a grim beauty of its own, and every time I went along the Place on my way to the Rue des Réservoirs to learn the news at the entrance to the Cour de Maroc, it compelled me to stay my steps.

I was especially struck by the return to the antique forms of life in the midst of a highly developed civilisation. War is one of the modes of life of primitive existence; during a campaign a soldier lives very much as do savages and barbarians. I do not mean to imply any reproach in the use of these words; I mean merely that man, in war time, goes back to something like the state of nature. A soldier has to cut and split wood for himself, to pitch his own tent, and to supply his own needs, trusting wholly to his own powers. He has to watch over his own safety, to stand on sentry, to peer into the darkness, to note the least motion of the blades of grass, just like a Red Indian in the woods. He has to make long marches, in silence; to attack, to defend himself, and very often, when his officers cannot transmit orders to him, he has to devise means of safety for himself. This is exactly the way men lived for many centuries, and it took many slow

improvements to bring about the complex condition of comfort we enjoy at the present day, unconsciously and almost without heeding it.

After a successful skirmish the guns taken from the enemy were brought to the Place d'Armes; the captured guns came along decked out like trophies, covered with lilac and may — it was then the early part of the month of May — and drawn by horses adorned with flowers under their ears. The soldiers of the artillery train, who drove them with a look of pride and high bearing, carried flowering branches by way of palms. The crowd hurried up and escorted them, uttering acclamations; it all looked like an antique triumph, and recalled to me the paintings by Giulio Romano and the cartoons by Andrea Mantegna in the palace at Hampton Court. It may be urged that guns did not exist in those days, although Milton has introduced them in the battle between the good and the bad angels, which occurred a great deal earlier, but it is quite certain that the scene was anything but modern. The expression of the faces, the attitudes of the bodies, the vigour of the horses, who resemble the horses in the historical paintings of the great masters, the mingling of weapons and foliage, remove one abruptly from the

ordinary class of spectacles and make one think of pictures of another age.

This truth was demonstrated to me, one day, in the plainest manner, by a most singular scene. I seemed to behold on the Place d'Armes of Versailles, but enlarged to life size, one of those wonderful drawings in which Decamps, in his search after the antique style, represented episodes of barbarian life; pitched camps, attacks, routs, processions of captives, migrations, carrying away of plunder, driving of herds of stolen cattle, and other similar subjects which he was led to undertake by the success of his "Battle of the Cymri."

It was a band of prisoners halted on their way to Satory under escort. It was hot enough that day to make even a cicala perspire; there was not a breath of air, not a cloud in the sky; the sun poured down molten lead upon the earth. The poor wretches, brought on foot from the gates of Paris, by cavalrymen who unconsciously compelled them to hurry on, worn out by fighting, a prey to dreadful anxiety, breathless, dripping with perspiration, had been unable to go a step farther, and it had been found necessary to allow them a few moments for rest. They were about one

hundred and fifty or two hundred in number, and they were obliged to squat or lie on the ground, like a herd of oxen stopped by their drivers at the entrance to a town. Around them stood their guards in a circle, as much overcome by the heat as the prisoners, scarce able to sit their motionless steeds and leaning their chests upon the pommels of their saddles. The loaded pistols were evidently heavy to their hands, and they were plainly struggling with sleep. It was impossible to tell the colour of their uniforms, so thick was the dust on them, and only the long lances, with their sharp spear-heads and no pennon, resting against their legs, enabled one to tell what arm they belonged to. Everything individual about them had vanished; they were no longer soldiers; they were the abstract warrior, the warrior of every age and every clime, Roman or Cymri, Greek or Mede, and they might have figured without fear of anachronism in the battles of Alexander or Cæsar just as they stood. Their horses, with their simple harness, wet with sweat, white with lather, had no modern peculiarity, and presented merely a character of antique generality.

I gazed upon these splendid horsemen, regretting that there was no painter of genius to note with swift

stroke the handsome lines, naturally and artlessly heroic, and also to sketch the no less interesting types of captives, turned into barbaric prisoners, Dacians, Getæ, Heruli, Abari, such as are seen on the *bassi-relievi* of triumphal arches and the spirals of columns of Trajan. They had no special dress indicative of a nationality or an epoch; their trousers, blouses, or shirts, rumpled, torn, tattered, clinging to the bodies with perspiration, merely concealed their nudity, but did not clothe them, and had preserved no special form of garment; and in such a condition, blouses, smock-frocks, cloaks, and tunics are all very much alike, while breeches are, in the sculptures of antiquity, the distinctive mark of barbarians. Several of them had wrapped their heads in cloth, by way of protection from the sun, for prisoners are deprived of their hats or caps, in order that they may be the more easily recognised in the crowd if they should attempt to escape. Others had bound their wounded feet with rags tied with string, and they looked so like Philoctetus in his island that they would have made a sculptor think of him; their little bits of rags connected them with Greek art. All these tatters, under the brilliant light, appeared discoloured like the draperies in a grisaille painting, and even the hair of

the prisoners, old and young, was of a uniform gray, so completely was the original shade concealed by the dust.

Among the prisoners were a few women, squatting on their haunches, after the manner of Egyptian figures in the judgment of the dead, and clothed in earth-stained rags that, however, formed superb folds. Some of them, grimly sitting apart from the group as if they contemned it, had the look of Michael Angelo's sybils, but I must own that the greater number looked like strygæ, lamiæ, and empusæ, or, leaving aside the mythology used in the second part of "Faust," like the bearded witches of Shakespeare, forming a hideous variety of hermaphrodites, the combination of the ugliness of both sexes. Strange to say, among these monsters was a lovely little maid of thirteen to fourteen, with a candid virgin face, fair, dressed with scrupulous neatness and cleanliness in a light blue jacket with black braiding, and a white skirt, short like the skirts of very young girls, and allowing to be seen stockings well drawn up, and elegant, though dust-covered shoes. By what chance was that little angel among these demons, that pure flower among these mandragoras? I could not find out; no one knew, and my query remained unanswered.

Somewhat in the rear, on a waggon or a *prolonge*, lay on his back, stiff as a corpse, an old man with a long white beard, whose bald head shone in the sun like a helmet. Although he was motionless and had the angular lines of a statue outstretched upon a tomb, he was not dead, and in his eyes, that blinked in the blinding light, gleamed a sombre glance of irreconcilable hate and powerless rage. Terrifying indeed was this Nestor of revolt, this patriarch of the insurrection, at once foul and venerable, and who seemed to be a representation of the Almighty on the barricades.

These wretched beings, made athirst by alcohol, fighting, the long march, the intense heat, the fever induced by a situation of the most critical and the terror of approaching death — for many of them believed they would be summarily shot at the end of the journey — were devoured by burning, inextinguishable thirst. They panted and breathed short like hunting-dogs, and cried in a hoarse, harsh voice, unsoftened by saliva, "Water! water! water!" They licked their cracked lips with their dry tongues, chewed the dust between their teeth, and compelled their arid throats to violent and vain acts of deglutition. They were un-

questionably atrocious rascals, murderers, incendiaries, by no means interesting, but even animals in such a condition would have moved to pity. So kindly souls began bringing along a few pails of water. Then the whole band cast itself pell-mell upon them, pushing, shoving, throwing one another down, dragging themselves on all fours, plunging their heads into the buckets, drinking long draughts, careless of the blows raining down upon them, their gestures those of brute beasts, in which it would have been hard indeed to see any trace of human attitudes. Those who, either because they were too weak or less agile, could not reach the pails placed on the ground, held out their hands suppliantly, with little ways like those of sick children who want sweetmeats. They uttered soft and pleading moans, and bent their arms like those of monkeys, bending them at the wrists with bestial and savage poses. A huge ruffian, a sort of Vitellius of the grog-shop, whose torn smock-frock revealed the muscular chest, reddened by habitual libations, indulged in the most moving pantomime in order to obtain a drop of the precious beverage. He looked like a Roman Cæsar being dragged to the gemoniæ by the mob. A poor horse, maddened by thirst, charged towards the buckets, right

through the crowd and added to the disorder. At last, thanks to the pitying women, glasses, goblets, cups, and bowls were brought up from all sides, and the poor devils were at least able to slake their thirst like men instead of lapping up the water like brutes.

As I watched the sight, I might just as well have fancied myself on the field of battle at Pharsalus as on the Place d'Armes at Versailles, in front of the palace of the Great King.

XIX

THE STEPS OF ROSE MARBLE

MAY, 1871.

IT often happens that an operatic motive, a refrain on a grinding organ, a phrase in a song heard by chance, unconsciously sticks in one's mind. At the very moment one might be thinking of something else, but one of the fibres of the brain, unwatched by the will, has seized upon the theme and clings obstinately to it. A breath whispers it in the ear, and the obsession of it speedily becomes unbearable. At times it is words instead of music — though this is not so frequent — but it did so happen to me the other day in the most unexpected fashion.

As I was walking from the Court of Morocco to the Hôtel des Réservoirs, down that sloping Boulevard des Italiens where meets the "tout Paris" of Versailles, taking in the news, discussing the events, there was suddenly opened in the cabinet of my memory a drawer that had remained closed for a long time, and from it

rolled out, like unto the pearls of a necklace of which the cord has broken, these six words, "On Three Steps of Rose Marble." As every one is aware, that is the title of a poem of Alfred de Musset's. These words at once seized upon me, and fluttered upon my lips like a monotonous refrain that wearied yet charmed me. None the less I was unable to drive them away or to take my mind from them.

A friend would say to me, "The Neuilly bridge barricade has been stormed by our troops," and I would inwardly return, "On Three Steps of Rose Marble." Even at night, in my sleep, disconnected dreams whispered the words mockingly, as if to prevent my forgetting them while I slumbered. When I woke, the six words were outlined in the light of dawn upon the wall, and I began once more to repeat my unforgettable litany. This title, with its strangeness, its harmony, and its colour is, to every poet, a charm, in the original meaning of the word, and acts upon him like a spell. The effect, however, ought to be transitory and to die away with the vibration of the sonorous syllables, instead of being repeated in endless recurrence like the Simonetta echo. This was not the case with me, and the murmur was ever renewed.

The curious thing is that I could not remember a single line of that lovely poem, which I know by heart; both the thoughts and the rimes escaped me. I could dimly feel that they were there, as behind a black gauze, but it was out of my power to tear the veil asunder: the title alone flamed before me, and I spelt it out mechanically, repeating the line, will he nill he, "On Three Steps of Rose Marble."

How came that line to awaken in me, seeing that the thought it contained was so utterly unconnected with the existing situation of things? In the case of musical obsession, the haunting phrase has been expressed by an orchestra, an instrument, or a voice. The point of departure of the "possession" is known — it is downright possession — but there was nothing analogous in this. No one had spoken the magic words in my vicinity; I had not seen them in print or writing; I had not chanced across an odd volume of Musset on my table, after carrying it about in the peregrinations and exodus of the campaign. Perhaps by some occult "correspondence," to make use of Swedenborg's mystic expression, "The Three Steps of Rose Marble" had, unconsciously, so far as I was concerned, put themselves *en rapport* with me. The

three steps are in the park at Versailles and the neighbourhood increased their power of influencing me. Then I am fond or rather madly fond of marble, the noble material that knows how to preserve form, the sparkling flesh of heroes and deities, even when it is merely a block in which slumbers a possible masterpiece, and therefore there must exist secret affinities between us.

The charming poet, now dead, who sent me such lovely stanzas from the other world, about "Spirite," having at present no medium at hand, was doubtless taking this way of recalling by a gentle vibration, the remembrance of himself in my memory, and was sending me an imperceptible bit of rose-coloured marble. While he lived, he was always preoccupied by the whiteness of Paros, to the great disgust of utilitarians, and shared my love for marble. In that common sentiment, and not far from the steps on which he had fixed his dreamy glance, our minds, though dwelling in different spheres, may have met, and the words that summed up both the poem and the poet had sprung forth like a call that was repeated with fateful persistency until I had understood the desire of the soul hovering near me.

THE STEPS OF ROSE MARBLE

For a few days, eager for news, snatching the papers from the sellers, and altogether taken up with the mighty drama in which the fate of France is at stake, I endeavoured, but in vain, to drive away the inward refrain that was as troublesome as the buzzing of an obstinate insect's wings. At last I felt that the spirit called upon me to perform a pious pilgrimage, and, as it were, to pour out a libation of remembrance upon the marble on which his glance had dwelt, which had been penetrated by his thought and warmed by his love that beheld in the snowy material, veined with azure and rose, a hunting Diana's virginal bosom. It was plain that a grain of incense had to be burned upon that altar in honour of pure beauty.

I forthwith started on my excursion, and as various official orders barred the shortest way, I took the longest without much regret. Poets are never in a hurry to reach their destination, for the incidents on the road entertain them and make them forget where they are going.

Scarcely had I passed through the gates when I found myself in deepest solitude: solemn calm succeeded passing bustle; it was leaving the present to re-enter the past, and all sounds died away at the threshold of the majestic and peaceful gardens.

Very beautiful and noble in design is the round open space surrounded with trees in the centre of which is the Basin of Neptune. The whole architecture of the fountains is old, and dates from the time of Louis XIV; it was decorated under Louis XV by Bouchardon and Lemoyne. Never has flamboyant rococo twisted shapes, rumpled folds, and curved scrolls in bolder or more lightsome fashion. Neptune, in the midst of his court of Nereids and sea monsters, brandishes his trident with furious gesture. A little farther, arranged as pendants, Tritons are mastering sea horses, and on the sides of the horse-shoe little genii, eight feet high, like the children on the font in Saint Peter's at Rome, are teasing fantastic orcs, with claws on their fins. The whole thing looks like an operatic setting of that day carried out in reality. In spite of the depravation of taste, there is a pompous and grandiose facility about the composition that is very effective. The dull colour of the groups, cast in lead, harmonises happily with the gray tones of the vermiculated stone-work fringed with stalactites, while the streaming waters impart to them, on fête days, the shimmer and lustre they lack when the fountains are not playing.

The recurrence of the refrain warned me that I was dallying too long, and I continued on my way. At the end of the walks that open fan-wise around the Basin, in the direction of Trianon, there floated, as in the vaporous blue vistas in the parks in Watteau's paintings, faint smoke, the mistiness of which prolonged the aerial perspective. Spring, like unto a timid landscape painter who puts in his leafage with little touches, was putting on the branches, with a sober and insufficiently filled brush, a few touches of tender green. It was the time when the trees are full of sap and are most elegant. Their delicate and light ramifications have not yet disappeared under the thick foliage, yet they are no longer clad in winter's sombre livery.

On the edge of the Basin of Ceres, its waters made opalescent by quantities of soapsuds, soldiers were engaged in washing their linen and in hanging it to dry on the sides of the bowers. What would the shade of the Great King have said, that is, supposing it still haunts the garden wherein he strolled with la Vallière, Fontange and Montespan? No doubt it would have assumed a disdainfully supercilious air, though, from the point of view of the purely picturesque, the red tint of the trousers warmed up the somewhat cold green of

the landscape as do the red spots with which Decamps, the colourist, was wont to diaper his stretches of sward.

As I kept on ascending towards the terrace upon which the palace displays its fine lines, I looked in, through the interstices, slightly festooned with leaves, of the trellis-work, destroyed partly by time and largely by man, at the reserved portion of the park called the Baths of Apollo, and between the trunks of the trees I made out the artificial rocks down which fall the waters of the cascade on the days of the *grandes eaux* or display of the waterworks.

It has acquired, thanks to being left alone, to solitude and to climbing plants, a natural air that is partly contradicted, it must be owned, by the marble groups placed in niches chiselled out of the rock. Yet this reminiscence of art is not unpleasing in the midst of this ordered nature. Under the vaulting supported by heavy pillars roughly blocked out, the Sun-King, the young Versailles Apollo, having performed his luminous journey and coming to rest in the bosom of Thetis, stands out from the dark background. Around him press the Nereids: one, kneeling down, is unlacing his cothurns; another presents a ewer filled with perfume; a third removes a portion of his garments, and if the fourth is not

holding the shirt out to him, it is simply because the Greek gods did not sport that particular vestment. This mythological *petit coucher* of the King is very gallant, and Girardon has imparted to it a thoroughly French grace. The two grottoes where Tritons are stabling the horses of the sun, form fit pendants for the central one, and the effect of the three white spots on the dark rock is quite happy.

The sky that day was a mingled blue and white, and the light poured down with charming changes of shine and shadow, while sun-spangles sparkled here and there through the thickets and tipped the blades of grass. The birds were singing, and nature's imperturbable serenity was undisturbed by the occasional distant cannon-shots; the eternal functions were going on silently. Meanwhile I was sunk in dreamy, forgetful contemplation, when suddenly the line, "On Three Steps of Rose Marble," which I had not heard for some time, began to whisper softly in my inward ear in a tone of friendly upbraiding.

Forsaking the Grotto of Apollo, I proceeded along the row of yew trees trimmed to the shape of globes, pyramids, and other quaint forms, casting but a superficial glance at the "Four Seasons" and the "Four

Quarters of the Globe," slackening my pace in front of the lovely "Diana the Huntress," that stands by the corner of the Basin of the Lions, and thus I reached the main terrace.

The nearer I approached, the more my memory came back to me, and methought I heard the poet's voice saying to me, in its well-known timbre and with its careless grace: —

"Do you remember, O my friend, The steps of marble rose? As one to the great pond goes, Where the Orangery doth lie, To the left from the palace doors."

I was on the right road. The replica of the antique Cleopatra, of which there is a copy in bronze in the Tuileries, was still slumbering in the same place, one arm bent above the head, in the tranquil, graceful pose that makes death look like sleep, and along the balustrade of the terrace were ranged, as of yore, the charming bronze vases that are so diverse in their apparent symmetry, with their handles formed of chimeras, satyrs, and little winged genii. The steps were not far off; they are close to a white vase, very neatly carved and most tasteful, which to de Musset had the advantage of not being Gothic. It has indeed a fine

outline, and its sides swell out like the cup of some great lily. Under its shadow lie the famous three steps sung by the poet, with their hue of faded rose, their azure transparency, and cut out of marble so fresh, so living, so similar to flesh, that one dares scarcely tread upon them lest one should trample upon a goddess's bosom. Then is felt the full truth of the image evoked by the poet addressing the block of marble, that ought to have been placed on the pediment of some Greek temple: —

"When into thee their saw did cut, These stone-cutters did grievous wound A Venus yet in slumber sunk, And the crimson o'er thee flushing Is the blood that she did shed."

I remained there for a time as on a sacred spot where the pilgrim offers up his prayers, and peace came back into my soul; the forgotten feeling for art again took possession of me, and poetic thoughts fluttered around me, beating their wings like flocks of doves. I thought of ideal form, of divine rhythm, of immortal beauty, of the nymphs and virgins of Greece that ran barefoot in the dew, their locks wreathed with smilax and violets, of all those fair imaginings that cast a golden veil upon life's nakedness.

No doubt this was the lesson the poet who has vanished into eternal serenity intended to teach to the poet who has been left amid the tumults of earth, for since that day I have been freed from the obsession to which I had been a prey. Now I can abstract my thoughts, I can write, without hearing the still, small voice whispering low to me, "On three Steps of Marble flushed with rose."

XX

THE VERSAILLES OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH

MAY, 1871.

I

ON debouching into the Place d'Armes at Versailles from one of the avenues of centenarian trees that lead to it, the palace appears in front in all its former magnificence. At once the visitor feels himself transported into another sphere; for it is all so vast, grand, solemn, majestically regular that modern life is fairly intimidated and respectfully lowers its voice.

The general aspect has been preserved, and were the Great King to return to earth, he might suppose, at the first glance, that nothing has been altered in his Olympic abode. But a closer examination would speedily undeceive him.

For the sake of the numerous guests whom Versailles shelters nowadays, and who do not succeed in

crowding its broad avenues, it might prove interesting to restore the palace as it originally was, and to reproduce the façade as it was seen by the courtiers coming from Paris towards the year 1710. Architects often carry out, for the sake of practice, such restorations of buildings in a greater or less state of ruin, and occasionally of monuments that have wholly disappeared. But in this case there is no need of any such effort of the imagination; the building exists, and the story of the changes it has undergone is known; these changes, besides, have not materially altered its appearance. It appears to be an irresistible tendency among generations that settle down in a building characteristic of a given epoch, to remodel it in accordance with their own taste and to leave upon it their own often regrettable mark.

Let us begin with the iron railing that separates the Place d'Armes from the palace court; it has remained such as it was formerly, with its two stone groups flanking the gates, and representing the "Triumph of France over the Empire," and the "Triumph of France over Spain." In the days of Louis XIV, however, a second railing divided this vast space into two courts. It started from the corner of the pavilions in front, on

which to-day are inscribed the words, "To All the Glories of France," and curved through the axis of the modern statue of the Great King, the figure being by Petitot and the horse by Cartellier. Both the King and his steed are in a hideous troubadour style, and make one bitterly regret the monumental railing, richly gilded and adorned with two beautiful groups by Coysevox and Tuby, which have been shifted to the back corners of the terrace, where the court ends on the Place d'Armes side, a spot where nobody ever sees them.

That was a much better arrangement than the one which has replaced it. There were two other railings, the fastenings of which may still be made out, and which passed through the intercolumniations of the pavilions; these closed in the Princes' Court and the Chapel Court which are situated one on each side of the Marble Court. So the palace, properly so called, was thus completely closed in and circumscribed within its own bounds.

On either side of the Court of Honour, that formerly served as vestibule to the Royal Court, itself leading to the Marble Court, rose and still stand nowadays large brick and stone buildings called the Minis-

ters' Wing, in which were situated the offices. The ground, terraced in a way to diminish and modify the slope of the court, allows of their substructures retaining horizontal lines. It is on the balustrade that borders this slope that, in the reign of Louis-Philippe, were placed on high pedestals, on the right and on the left — for the terracing extends on both sides — the twelve colossal statues that used to crush the Pont de la Concorde with their weight. Four Marshals of the Empire have been added to them. These colossi, coldly, staringly white, should be returned to the Île des Cygnes, and stored in the marble warehouse there, unless it were thought better to forward each of the illustrious personages they represent each to his native town. They would look better standing alone in the centre of a square.

The two pavilions that rise at the entrance of the Royal Court were formerly of a different shape. They were topped by an elegant roof, lighted by round and by dormer-windows, adorned with statues and surmounted with a small lantern, the roof's harmonious curve combining marvellously well with the buildings at right angles to them. The façades had six pillars forming porticoes. Under Louis XV the pavilion

nearest the Chapel was rebuilt by Gabriel, the architect of the Garde-Meuble and the Ministry of Marine, a man of great talent, but whose ideas differed from those that ruled taste in the reign of Louis XIV.

He should not be blamed for having disregarded the style of architecture of the palace to which were to be added the new buildings he was called upon to carry out, since the order was given him precisely because the then existing buildings were considered to be in bad taste. The archaic feeling so greatly developed among us and which insists that renovations and restorations shall be scrupulously in accordance with the original style of the building, did not then exist. Architects did not hesitate to plaster a Classical façade upon the nave of a Gothic church, and artists calmly erected Pompadour monuments in Notre-Dame and put Roman arches under ogees with the utmost serenity. Buildings that had lasted long thus bore the mark of the ages they had traversed, with their particular forms of taste, of art, of manners, of improvements, and of degenerescence. It is true that the general characteristics of the building were consequently modified to a certain extent, but the building remained more living, more interesting, more historical, as it were. Every

age has done the same, and it is but rarely that the plan drawn by the first architect of a palace or a church has been carried out in its integrity. It is only when criticism flourishes, when art becomes curious, that its refinement is considered.

In itself Gabriel's pavilion is exceedingly fine and noble, with its Greek pediment, its tetrastyle portico with its Corinthian order, and its rusticated, channelled substructure, yet my antiquarian feeling, unknown to the people who lived nearer the golden age of France than we do, makes me feel that it would be more pleasing in some other place. I have no doubt that this pavilion was very generally preferred to the old one.

The pavilion on the left was not built until long afterwards, under Louis XVIII, by Dufour the architect, and was most probably erected in order to satisfy the requirements of symmetry, for the building is not carried out on the court side as in Gabriel's design.

What could have been the motives that led to the tearing down, in the days of Louis XV, of buildings which must have been quite solid then and whose aspect, judging by the engravings of the day, was both pompous and rich? Apart from the love of change

and the conviction that the men of that day could improve on the work of their predecessors, a conviction shared by each successive generation, it may be supposed that the brick and stone which had been sufficient for Henry IV, Louis XIII, and Louis XIV, appeared then to be materials too rustic to be worthy of being employed on a royal palace. It may be also, that the mingling of red and white, the ruddy tone of the façades, struck eyes accustomed to the white flecking of hair-powder and the bluish bloom of pastels as too robustly country-like.

As for the rose-and-white turret that rises on the roof, in the left corner of the Royal Court it may be knocked away in imagination, for, in the days of the Sun-King, it did not spoil the lines of the perspective with its unwelcome projection, seeing that it was built by Louis-Philippe in order to meet certain wants of easier internal communication.

The Marble Court, which is at the end of the buildings at right angles to the façade, was raised by five steps above the level of the court in front; this is now changed, and there is but one step left, the level of the ground having been lowered under Louis-Philippe.

No one, not even the King himself, could cross the

black and white paving of the Marble Court save on foot, as Monicart tells us in his "Versailles Immortalised": —

"His private staircase opening upon his passage, He crosses me on foot, for my paving By coach or horse's hoofs never has been damaged: These five steps, lower down, forbid their approach And prevent my black and white stone being touched."

Hence the King, in order to enter his carriage, was compelled himself to walk a few steps on his red-heeled shoes. Louis XV used to come out by a portico, the pillars of which have been removed, at the corner of the Royal Court, and there it was that Damiens stabbed, or scratched him, rather.

The façade of the palace at the back of the Marble Court is exactly as it was in the time of Louis XIV, with its roof with round and mansard windows, its lead bouquets, its open-work acroter, its dial on which the hours stand out in gold upon a ground of royal blue enamel, its pediment, on which show in high relief Girardon's "Hercules" and Marsy's "Mars," — the latter artist possibly having owed to the punning resemblance of the two names the order to carve the god that, like Hercules, symbolises the invincible King, —

its groups of pillars supporting a balcony and separating three archways, its red walls upon which busts, placed upon brackets, are set in oblong white panels. Nothing has been changed.

Of course in the other buildings a few things here and there have been altered, suppressed, or replaced; a bust is wanting in one place, a statue has gone from another; it fell and it has not been replaced; vases, too, have vanished, but these are not matters of any importance, and it would take too long to note all these minor ravages and embellishments.

If the original silhouette of the palace were to be restored, it would be necessary to replace upon the ridge of the chapel roof the gilded lantern, ending in a point, like that on the dome of the Invalides. I do not know why it was removed. It harmonised with the small cupolas of the pavilions that were torn down, and which surmounted the dials that have disappeared and been replaced by Gabriel's pediments.

I am not now writing a monograph of the palace of Versailles, but merely a sketch in which I point out briefly the main differences between its former and its present condition. Let me, however, note a few more points. The visitor has no doubt remarked, on trav-

ersing the Court of Honour, four lines of paving-stones running from the entrance gates to the gates in the second balustrade, by which the Royal Court was entered, on the spot where now stands the modern equestrian statue of Louis XIV. These lines are still perfectly plain, and it was on them that were dressed, when drawn up when the King went by, the Swiss Guards on the right and the French Guards on the left. The guard-rooms were situated in the substructure of the terracing that bounds the court on the Place d'Armes side.

Does my reader desire to people the palace again and to renew in it its former animation? It is the easiest thing in the world. I shall simply transcribe the old engraving which I am using for reference and for guide, and which is as crowded with figures as Della Bella's engraving of the Pont-Neuf.

The Swiss and the French Guards are at their posts, for the King has just returned, and his coach and eight, escorted by the musketeers and outriders, is driving into the Royal Court; two other coaches and six, belonging to princes of the blood or great noblemen, making way for it. Other coaches, with an equal number of horses, are ascending or descending the slope of the Court of

Honour, across which drive more rapidly two-horse carriages that correspond to our modern coupés. A multitude of figures, soldiers, courtiers, petitioners, ladies with high coifs, singly or in groups, dot the vast space. A goodly number of them are going in the direction of the ministers' wing. So far it is not difficult to reconstitute the appearance of things; only the costumes are different; the crowd is the same. There are also seen riders in the palace employ going off to bear orders or messages. If one will indulge in a little imagination, the present can be forgotten and life breaks out again, full and splendid, in the great resuscitated palace still gilded by the distant beams of the sun of Louis the Fourteenth. *Nec pluribus impar.*

II

THE FOUNTAINS WALK, THE TRIUMPHAL ARCH, THE THREE FOUNTAINS

The park is entered from the palace by passing under one of the three archways that open on the left, at the end of the Princes' Court, and on the right at the end of the Chapel Court. They were not glazed formerly, and used to frame in broad views of verdure and sky.

After proceeding a short distance on the great terrace and turning round, the façade of the palace shows in its fullest extent and magnificence such as it existed in the days of Louis XIV. Contrary to what happens in our rainy climate, it has not been blackened by time and the white stone has been only faintly toned a golden gray that is most pleasant to the eye. The façade lacks merely the trophies and vases which, placed upon the acroters of the balustrades at the top, broke effectively the immense horizontal line of the building, a line that is too bare at present, and varied its monotony by skilfully calculated intersequences. The glazed sashes, introduced under Louis-Philippe for the purpose of lighting the rooms of the Museum, are far from producing the same effect.

It is not my intention, in the course of my wanderings through the park, to describe what now exists, but rather that which has disappeared or been changed, and to restore things to the condition in which they were seen by the Great King. Let us, then, descend the steps, the upper part of which is guarded by the "Knife-grinder" and the "Crouching Venus" of Coysevox, which bears the date 1686 — a modern masterpiece after an antique one — and follow the Fountains Walk, com-

monly called the Allée des Marmousets. It is composed of children and little genii in groups of three, supporting basins, and arranged in two rows down the fairly steep sloping lawn, so as to show one above another as one looks up the walk.

Formerly these figures of children, which are in bronze, the patina being superb, bore basins that were alternately square and round, from which the water splashed into a lower basin of the same shape as the upper, and made, like it out of a single block of marble. The upper basins were filled with fruits and flowers modelled in lead, coloured in natural colours, and covered with a silver glaze by the streaming water. The children held in their hands various attributes significant of their attitudes. All this was done away with later, and all the square basins were replaced by round ones for the sake of symmetry. The traces of this arrangement may still be deduced from the shape of the plinths, and it was unquestionably more varied and more picturesque. The suppression of the coloured fruits is indicative of the beginning of the tendency to deaden tones which led to the substitution of Gabriel's façades for the red ones of Louis XIV.

At the foot of the Allée d'Eau lies the Basin of the

Dragon, but it is not in its present state that it was known to Louis XIV when he strolled through his park, perched on his high heels, leaning on his tall stick, and walking like a bantam pigeon; for he was a great pedestrian before the Lord, was Louis XIV. Instead of the bits of piping that prosaically emerge from the centre of the basin, a dragon, which gave its name to the fountain, writhed amid a host of swans bestridden by Cupids, a combination that produced a most attractive interlacing of jets of water flashing like arrows.

Nor did the Basin of Neptune then possess its group of the god of Ocean brandishing his trident, the Tritons and the children taming marine monsters. This is the work of Bouchardon, Lemoyne, and Adam, and was added under Louis XV. The vast stone basin, with its border of rustic bossing and madreporæ, and its line of leaden vases, alone existed then.

By the Allée d'Eau, on the right as one comes from the palace, there is a green bosquet, closed in by trellis-work and hedges, which is full of trees whose foliage is denser and wilder than that of the other trees in the park. If one has the key of the gate nearest to the Basin of the Dragon, and enters thereby, one is sur-

prised to find one's self, after going a few paces, in deep solitude, in a virgin forest, as it were. The trees have for many years been allowed to grow as they pleased, and they are none the less beautiful on this account, ivy-mantled as they are, their boles emerging from the tall grass, their branches interlacing, and their tops mingling in a wildering disorder that would disgust Le Nôtre and delights landscape painters. Yet it is speedily seen that they have not been planted at haphazard in this place. Their trunks, like pillars in a ruined hall, enclose an empty, sloping space, dug up here and there in regular fashion in accordance with a plan the traces of which can be made out under the maze of wild plants and parasitical vegetation. For here it was that, in the days of the original Versailles, rose the Triumphal Arch, or the triumphal reservoir rather, which was so greatly admired by contemporaries. The only trace of it left nowadays is the upheaval of the ground caused by the removal of the materials that composed it, and which has long since been overgrown with grass.

Yet if one turns towards the clump of trees on entering, there is to be seen in a state of complete ruin, a magnificent group on which Nature has worked in her

own way, applying here ornaments of dark mosses, sowing elsewhere a yellow floweret, and in another spot turning to account the disjointing of two stones to insert into it a bunch of hart's-tongue.

The group represents "France Triumphant" seated on a car supported upon a platform denticulated like the edge of a *buffet* fountain; for the group is a fountain also. The figure of France, in bronze that was formerly gilded, wears the helmet and bears the shield and the scales, while it is nobly draped in a royal mantle. The sun in his glory, the emblem of the King, shines in the centre of the shield, just where the lilies, struck off, no doubt, at the time of the Revolution, formerly were, as may be inferred from darker spots. The lance has vanished, but the pose of the hand and arm plainly shows that the figure was armed. Two captives, the one young, the other of mature age, and accompanied, the former by a lion, the latter by an eagle, symbolise Spain and the Empire vanquished. By their side lie their helmets with their fantastic ornaments, from the crests of which water shot out, as it did from their bucklers that are provided with jets and that formed basins for themselves, their disks being overset. The lion and the eagle also darted water forth, and it

jutted from every projection on the car, which is adorned with masks and face. A dragon expiring on the lower plinth and representing the "Dissolution of the Triple Alliance," vomited water from its many mouths. The dragon is still there, but spouts no more — which is a subtle allegory. I had thought the worthy animal was placed there merely for the purpose of casting quantities of spray into the basin, or, at most, for the purpose of playing the part of the Hydra of Anarchy, and I own that unless I had been told, I should never have guessed that it stands for the "Dissolution of the Triple Alliance."

The figure representing the Empire has suffered from a curious accident; the ground having given way under the weight of the monument has caused a change in the thrust of the group, which has borne upon the captive's leg and has bent it like an invalid's leg. The crippled statue has a curious appearance, but it is not surprising that it should have given way, since it is of lead.

This handsome group, constructed as a fountain and facing formerly the Triumphal Arch since removed, has a splendid decorative appearance. It would be easy to restore it; it was the work of Coysevox, Prou, and

Tuby, the latter of whom was familiarly called Baptiste in his day.

On turning away from the group of "France Triumphant," the Triumphal Arch used to be seen. It occupied the upper part of the rough and uncultivated piece of ground I have described, standing out against a background of trees the lower part of which was masked by a trellis adapted to the shape of the monument. It was constructed entirely of iron and gilded bronze, forming a portico with three arches in which stood three basins from which rose jets of water. In the centre of the pediment, were placed the arms of France amid a rich ornamentation. On the sloping sides of the front, six shells were set one above another, three on one side, three on the other; from them bubbled a stream of water that fell along a volute on either side of the portico, into five shells that threw the water back to one another. The substructure of the Arch, which was of the Ionic order, was cut in the form of steps, down which the water flowed in miniature cascades, fringing each step and allowing the ornamentation to show through its transparence. Two jets springing from a twisted and ornamental bracket defined the outer lines of the Arch, and basins placed

upon square scabellums formed companion pieces on either hand and also sent forth streams of water, but to a less height. Four triangular-sided obelisks, borne by griffins and surmounted by a golden lily, and the openings in which formed a setting for the mirrors the waters made in them as it dripped away, rose by two *buffet* fountains placed opposite one another and overflowing one into another. Near these buffets were two basins corresponding symmetrically to those placed on either side of the Triumphal Arch. I need not describe the other two buffets placed lower down and bearing on marble tablets the name of the King in the centre of a wreath of golden leaves. All the waters finally flowed into the centre of the grove through two spouts that formed tiny waterfalls and that were ornamented with huge dolphin-heads with dishevelled beards.

Such was the Triumphal Arch which was destroyed when the park was replanted under Louis XVI. Around it wound the Dædalian walks of a small maze; but nothing is left, not even the remembrance of it, and in order to find the situation or the form of the vanished monuments, one has to study the old plans and to glance over old engrav-

ings. But it is the Versailles of the past that I am describing: —

"O suns below the horizon vanished!"

On the left of the Allée d'Eau, still as one goes down from the palace, and facing the Bosquet of the Triumphal Arch, is another grove, called the Bosquet of the Three Fountains, which is also, like the other, enclosed by trellised and palisaded hedges. It was famous formerly for the abundant flow of its upspringing waters, but these were suppressed, like those in the neighbouring grove, at the time of the replanting of the park under Louis XVI. The place, though it is not quite as uncared for as the Bosquet of the Triumphal Arch, which for a time was used as a garden by the Prefect, whose residence has now become the Hôtel des Réservoirs, is nevertheless in a very neglected condition and behind its protecting bowers is quietly going back to the wild state. The nightingales carol in it to the top of their bent, and the blackbirds walk about as if they felt quite at home. Very few people penetrate within the place, though it is difficult to see why it should be reserved, and the key, when one manages to get hold of it, turns with difficulty

in the old rusty lock, over which spiders spin their webs.

The only vestiges of the three fountains are a thicker growth than usual of nettles, like the fairy rings in grass, that still outline the plan of the turf border which ran round the lower basin. This basin, the first one came upon when entering by the gate, at the bottom, was hexagonal, and from it spurted eight great jets of water rising to a height of fifty feet, and eight smaller ones that formed a sheaf in the centre of the basin and described a quarter arc as they fell back. Farther on, upon a terrace reached by a slope between two cascades falling over steps, stretched a square basin with ten jets, the four larger in the corners, the remaining six in the centre, their crystal wave cris-crossing so as to form an arbour or pavilion. Finally, at the very top, on the highest level of the slope, was a circular basin from which sprang with incredible noise, impetuosity, and ascending force, in a mist of iridescent spray, one hundred and forty jets of water. These, with the jets in the other basins, made up a total of one hundred and eighty, producing so fairy-like an effect that the beholder might well have fancied himself standing in Alcina's gardens. It formed a regular fireworks of

water, its silver bouquet shining out against the background of sombre verdure.

For the times it was a comparatively simple affair, as only water, trees, and sward were used in its composition. There were but a few bits of rockery or marble used in making the steps of the cascades, and the Great King must have considered this *landscape* "very sylvan and most rustic." Its splendour consisted in the wealth of and flashing of the waters, which were the admiration of "the Court and the City," as people said then. Louis XIV, when taking his posthumous walks, must regret the lovely waters, so cool, so transparent, and so boldly upspringing. But alas! the Three Fountains are dried up for ever, and their name alone is preserved in the grove of which they were the ornament.

III

THE BATHS OF APOLLO, THE WATER THEATRE, THE DOMES

THE Baths of Apollo still exist, and indeed the grove in which they stand is one of the most frequented in the gardens. There is nothing left, however, of the original arrangement, and the Great King himself

would find it difficult to recognise his creation, the groups of statuary alone having been left. I shall restore the early condition of things, since I have undertaken to describe more particularly all that has vanished of the Versailles of old.

The Baths of Apollo stood in a trellised space designed with recesses in which stood benches; great trees lifted their tops above the trellis, and low yew-trees, planted in front and trimmed to a point, completed the decoration. At the back of the space, on a pedestal from which water spouted out of three lions' heads, stood the famous group of "Apollo in the Home of Thetis," a transparent allusion to the King resting after the labours of the day. The lovely group is not, as is generally believed, the sole work of Girardon. That artist executed only the Apollo and the three nymphs placed in the forefront of the group. The three other nymphs in the background are by Regnaudin. The composition was surmounted and protected by a gilded bronze baldacchino, and the slenderness of the supports allowed the outline and details of the figures to be fully appreciated. The steeds of the Sun, their harness removed and being groomed by Tritons, were likewise protected by baldacchini, and

formed two groups placed symmetrically on either side of the central one. The horses on the right are by Guérin, and those on the left, which are far better, by Marsy.

The bosquet, therefore, had that solemn, regular, and splendid look which is characteristic of the style of that period. Art did not then seek to conceal itself behind nature; it showed itself openly, and boldly "affirmed" its existence, as we say in our nineteenth-century jargon. Men, in those days, were fond of those splendid compositions in which the human will left but a carefully circumscribed liberty to the chances and caprices of vegetation. Gardens were built just as much as planted, and the trees had to imitate architectural forms; the quickset hedges turned back at right angles like the leaves of a screen of verdure; the yews were clipped into the shape of pyramids or of balls; skilful trimming wrought vaulting out of the leafy masses, and what we now call the picturesque was most carefully avoided. This taste, or style, improperly called the French style, had come to us from Italy, where in the villas and vineyards of Popes and Roman princes were to be found examples of the mingling of terraces, buildings, statues, vases, green trees, and upspringing waters.

I myself, in the days of Romanticism, paraphrased more or less closely the ingenious contrast set forth by Victor Hugo in his preface to "Cromwell," between an American virgin forest and the gardens of Versailles, and, like my fellows, I made fun of the "little yews set out in rows like onions." But I was in the wrong, and the gardens were precisely those that suited this particular palace; there was a wondrous harmony in that ensemble of set forms among which the life of the day was able to develop freely its majestic and somewhat slow evolutions. The result is an impression of grandeur, of orderliness, and of beauty which no one can help feeling. Versailles remains without a peer in the world: it is the highest formula of a complete art and the expression, carried to its highest power, of a civilisation that had reached its fullest state of development.

When the gardens were replanted under Louis XVI, taste had changed. Rousseau, the Genevese citizen, had discovered nature; English ideas were invading the continent; "landscape gardens" had become the fashion, that is, gardens with rolling ground, unclipped clumps of trees, winding walks, green lawns, slow-flowing waters spanned by rustic bridges, imitation

grottoes, artificial ruins, and huts containing automata busied in country pursuits. By admiring these fine things one proved one's self "tender-hearted," the great object of the day, and naturally the notion was entertained of replanting the garden in the modern taste.

A good deal of fun was already being made of walks absolutely straight, of clipped hedges, of flower-beds with box-wood borders, laid out in patterns like tapestries. A mill churning soapy waters with its wheels, as are the mills in Watteau's landscapes, was considered at that time far finer than the handsomest piece of hydraulic architecture adorned with statues. The enormous expense the change entailed, the seriousness of the events that supervened, were no doubt the reason why the project was not carried out, though the new arrangement of the Baths of Apollo, the former style of which I have just described, is plainly a beginning of the work.

The transformation was carried out in accordance with the plans prepared by Hubert-Robert, the fashionable designer of the day, the painter of ruins, the Romanticist of the time, an artist endowed with a feeling for the decorative and the picturesque which is appre-

ciated even now, and whose paintings, whose clever sketches especially, are much sought after by amateurs. He conceived the notion of digging in a huge artificial mass of rock three grottoes, in one of which he placed the group of Apollo and the nymphs, and the other two of which were turned into stables for the steeds of the Sun being rubbed down by Tritons. The centre grotto is a roughly blocked-out rustic order cut in the mass of the rock, with an almost regular arched vaulting, which has the look of being a natural feature turned to account by art. Rock-plants were sown between the blocks of stone to imitate the wildering of plants left to grow as they please, and the water flowed out from between the cracks, rippling over the anfractuosities, forming little waterfalls, and tumbling, boiling, and foaming to the foot of the rock into a basin arranged to look like a lakelet.

The mass of artificial rock-work was surrounded with trees planted without plan, in order to simulate the wildness of thickets, and imparted to the grove a picturesque aspect entirely foreign to the decorative plan of the old gardens. But it must be confessed that this innovation, which was conformable to the literary tendencies of the day, proved a great success, and even

nowadays the Baths of Apollo are among the parts of the garden the most admired and the most resorted to. Nevertheless they are no more than a change in the serious and splendid Louis XIV taste, and the beginning of a decadence that was not again to be stayed. The English style displaced French taste, and the beauties of Versailles, the wonder of the universe, became purely historical: life had left them.

Not far from here, near the Three Fountains, within an enclosure of hedges and trellis, was formerly the Water Theatre, a design greatly admired in its day, but of which not a trace is left. The Water Theatre was destroyed under Louis XVI, when the gardens were replanted, — a fatal operation that caused to disappear many curiosities well worth regretting, and deprived the work of the Great King of part of its individuality. The Water Theatre was a large round space, one hundred and sixty-six feet in diameter, divided into two parts, the one, surrounded with turf steps, serving as an auditorium, and the other containing the stage properly so called. On the palisade formed by the footlights of this aquatic theatre, rose four rustic rocaille fountains, on which, on the left, groups of children, by Houzeau, were playing with a crayfish and a griffin, and

on the right, other children, the work of le Hongre, were teasing a swan and holding a lyre. These four groups were no doubt cast in lead; no one knows what has become of them, and the chances are they were thrown into the melting-pot.

From the curtain of carefully clipped trees that formed the back-drop of the theatre, radiated fanwise three walks that afforded prolonged vistas, and were made to resemble the wings of a scene, the trunks of the trees being hidden behind double quickset hedges. Three rows of jets of water rose in lines one above another on the steps of the small waterfalls that fell from the back of the avenues in the direction of the spectator. At the end of the avenues were small groups that can scarcely have been visible through the upspringing and spray of the waters. In the centre avenue was Jupiter bestriding an eagle that held the terrestrial globe in its talons; Legros was the sculptor. In the avenue on the right, Mars, youthful, holding a buckler and placed on a lion striking down a wolf; this group was by Desjardins. Finally, in the avenue on the left, Pluto, the god of riches, with Cerberus, the hell hound, for a steed. This was the work of Masson.

The theatre possessed six water stage-settings, the invention of Vigarani, who was expert in hydraulic marvels, then exciting, on account of their novelty, almost childish admiration. By means of diverse conducting-tubes and by turning cocks in other directions, the jets of water were made to assume unexpected forms and directions, producing set pieces, as in fireworks, to the great delight of the spectators seated upon the turf steps of the auditorium. These settings were called the Sheets, the Lances, the Gate, the Fleurs de lis, the Lesser and the Greater Arbours. The Greater Arbours were the final tableau and, as it were, the apotheosis of this aquatic show. When all the jets shot up, crossed, curved, described segments of circles, assumed different figures, fell and broke with crystalline sparkling, the public became enthusiastic and applauded just as at theatrical performances.

Traces of this admiration are to be found in a description of Versailles, written in heroic verse, by C. Denis, "fountaineer to the King." If he is not much of a poet, at least there is no question of his skill as a hydraulic engineer.

"Finally the Great Arbours, though they come last Yield not to the first in glory and honour. The sight is charming,

I must own: And as long as the Theatre plays, The decorations and the basins, The Sheets and the Gate to the same purpose tending, Send up their varied jets to show us The respect and honour they pay to their master."

In that line, which was by no means too excessive in its adulation at the time, C. Denis, "fountaineer to the King," forestalled the respectful remark of an illustrious Academician: "These two gases will now have the honour of combining in the presence of Your Majesty." The jets of water were to the full as well bred as the gases.

A plantation of trees, now turning into a thicket behind its enclosure of trellis-work, has taken the place of the Water Theatre.

As one proceeds down the carpet of sward, called the *Tapis Vert*, which occupies the centre of the walk that leads from the Fountain of Latona to the Basin of Apollo, there is to be seen on the right, coming from the palace, a narrow oblique walk, leading to a sort of amphitheatre enclosed by railings. This part of the gardens was formerly called the Domes, and it is indeed the name it still bears, though the domes have vanished.

When the key had creaked in the lock and the gate

yielded to the pressure I put upon it, I entered within a circular space enclosed by a quickset hedge. Above the hedge rose into the blue heavens tall, elegant trees well fitted to vie with the sparkling ascending jets of water, perfect trees of a royal garden, that had, nevertheless, having been left to themselves for a few years, regained a certain amount of independence and of natural waywardness. The ivy, quite uninvited, had made its way into the hedge and had cast its garlands upon the statues that were trying to steady themselves upon their crumbling pedestals. It had encircled with a green sash the waist of a lissome Diana, and had bestowed a leafy cothurn upon a mythological hero. In the absence of the gardener, the grass was amusing itself growing out of bounds and showing upon the walks. It was a most delightful retreat; the nightingales, intoxicated by the scent of the flowers of May, rivalled each other in the execution of their most brilliant roulades, and seemed to be taking part, in the presence of a winged arbiter, in a competition of song like the Minnesingers at the Wartburg.

Thoughtfully I sat down within the deserted space, forgetful of the purpose of my visit — the restoration of the former aspect of the place. But, when I re-

membered it, I had a fairly easy task, a part of the ruins left standing indicating the original plan with sufficient distinctness.

A circular bench, divided into four steps descending to the hollow where lies the basin of the jet of water, has for a back a balustrade broken at intervals by acroters or pedestals adorned with low *bassi-relievi*, carved with infinite skill, and representing military attributes: trophies, weapons, standards, drums, bugles, bucklers with the head of Medusa, all rather indistinguishable at the first glance, blackened, rusted, green with lichens, spotted here and there with a leprous dry moss, disjointed, cracked, but not irrevocably damaged. Upon that bench, with its majestic curve against the verdant background of the hedge, it would not take much imagination to see sitting the members of an areopagus.

Now let us restore in thought the two domes, or pavilions, rather, which were falling into ruin and which Louis-Philippe caused to be taken down, no doubt because the expense of restoration appeared to be too great. The domes were placed opposite each other on either side of the round space, the centre of which is occupied by the basin. They were quadran-

gular in form, decorated with pillars and pilasters of the Ionic order, and a pediment bearing the arms of France. The ornaments on the roof, on the pediments, the genii on the coping, supporting the fleur-de-liséd crown, the trophies of weapons on the inner and outer panels, placed between the pillars, and the friezes were in gilded bronze, while the rich marble pavement formed a very exquisite mosaic. The whole presented an ensemble at once splendid and gallant. The dimensions of the buildings could not have been very great, judging from the remains of the foundations that have been razed to the ground.

Let us clear of the mosses, the parasitical plants, and the black stains the white and the red-veined marbles of the circular balustrade and of the hexagonal one in which the basin itself is set; let us set close the disjointed blocks, replace a few broken balusters, clear away the rubbish from the beautiful fountain supported by dolphins, and whence shot up a jet of water to a height of seventy feet, and we shall have pretty nearly the original aspect of the Domes. To make the effect complete, let us cause to flow in the channel on the second balustrade the water which spurted from the pedestals set among the balusters, and make the mass

flow in a broad sheet into the interior of the basin; let us bring back from Saint-Cloud, where they must be even now, Louis-Philippe having caused them to be set in the private gardens of the palace, the beautiful statues of "Daybreak," "Ino," "Acis the shepherd," "the Hunting Diana," "Galatea," "Amphitrite," and "Arion," the work of the skilful sculptors Legros, Rayol, Tuby, Magnier, Anselme Flamen, Michel Anguier, and Raon; let us replace them on their pedestals in the place of the odds and ends of statues of uneven height, brought from the Little Trianon, and the Great King would find nothing changed in the Domes. He would feel no surprise at not seeing the statue of Victory standing upon the basin, since he himself caused it to be removed, impelled by a modesty most unusual in him. Perchance he was wrong in doing so, for the "Victory" harmonised well with the warlike and triumphal character of the whole scheme of decoration.

IV

THE LABYRINTH, ÆSOP'S FABLES, THE ROYAL ISLE OR ISLE OF LOVE, THE BALL-ROOM

If one faces away from the palace and proceeds to the end of the terrace, one comes upon a basin adorned

with two bronze groups representing, the one, a tiger fighting a bear, the other, a dog pulling down a stag. The fountain is easily known by the pretty statue by Legros, which stands out white against the background of sombre verdure that shades the basin. The companion statue, one of Flora, if I am not mistaken, is merely gracefully decorative, but Legros' work has a charm all its own. It represents water; the arch features are surmounted by a wreath of reeds, and the troublous expression makes one think of Shakespeare's "perfidious as the wave." With one hand she holds up her drapery that rises no higher than the hips, and in the other she bears an urn from which flows a marble wave. Her foot rests upon a dolphin whose forked tail twists and turns, and which gives firmness to the figure. The stone has been wrought with a suppleness, one might even say a fluidity, most appropriate to the subject; it is indeed water condensed into the form of a woman. Legros' statue is full of modern feeling, and contrasts with its placid sisters whose beauty remains majestic, and who might ride in the King's carriages.

From this basin, the ground sinks between the Orangery wall, the angle of which is marked by a

copy of the Cleopatra of antiquity, that bears traces of the same oxidation which had imparted flesh tints to the "Three Steps of Rose Marble," and a magnificent clump of trees, clipped in palisade form for half their height, and then curving in dome form up to their summits. This walk — one of the finest in the gardens, in my opinion, thanks to the mingling of foliage and architecture — slopes down rather sharply and leads to the door of the Orangery, formed of a rustic order, the noble and grave style of which is worthy of the palace.

Almost opposite are to be seen two very simple pillars, supporting a perfectly plain iron-work gate, the open leaves of which invite one to enter a cool and shady grove, in which the seeker after silence finds solitude, and is but rarely disturbed by visitors. This is the place where formerly was situated one of the curiosities of the gardens of Versailles, now completely destroyed, and which was called "The Labyrinth" or "Æsop's Fables."

There is nothing left of the original arrangement. The quickset hedges that formed the maze disappeared at the time of the general cutting-down of trees that took place under Louis XVI, the object of which was,

no doubt, to allow of the gardens being replanted in the fashion of the day. To-day the grove is merely a thicket, that might well be thought older than it is, in view of the size and the leafiness of the trees. In the centre has been made a sort of clearing surrounded by huge tulip-trees that recall the giant tulip-tree in Edgar Allan Poe's "Gold Bug."

In the centre of that space, stands, with her gesture of pudicity, a statue of the Venus of Medici, moulded from the original and cast in green bronze, in the days of the Renaissance, by the Fontainebleau artists. The green is not due to the patina; it is part and parcel of the mass of the metal itself, and has not the verdigrised hues of other bronzes that have been exposed to wind and rain. A peculiarity of these castings is that the statues are not connected with the pedestal, and merely have under the feet something like a broad sandal, a bronze sole by which they are screwed down to the stone or marble pedestal. This particular figure is exquisitely graceful and realises the idea of prettiness such as the Greeks understood it.

The "Venus of Medici" is very small, its stature not exceeding that of our elegant Parisian women; it is

not more than four feet six inches high, as I ascertained by comparing the length of the shadow it casts with my own shadow. Four vases, slender and bold, with light handles, the sides of each adorned with a crab with crooked claws, that is, rather, the Cancer of the zodiac, are placed symmetrically around it, and must have once spouted water out of their orifices. They are quite simple, but possess a certain haughtiness of pride and elegance that is lacking in the vases, nevertheless so handsome and so rich, of the Louis XIV period.

A curious effect, but by no means an unpleasant one, is produced by the green statue and the green vases in the penumbra that makes the light itself greenish; it is a rest after the incessant whiteness of marble and its background of verdure.

I find, however, that I am engaged in describing the modern garden, while it is with the bosquet of olden days that I have to do. Let me get back to my labyrinth. By the gate stood sentry two statues in painted lead, representing, the one, Cupid, and the other, Æsop, the fabulist; the former was the work of Legros, the latter, that of Baptiste Tuby.

I take from a guide of that day the following pas-

sage: "Cupid holds a ball of thread in its hands, to signify that while the god at times leads us into a maze of difficulties, at the same time it gives us the means of making our way through them and surmounting them. Meanwhile Æsop appears to be urging that the ball of thread is useless, because without wisdom one can never escape from the pitfalls dug by love." This strikes me as an admirable explanation, and as ingenious a piece of interpretation as Kreutzer's "Symbolics." The presence of Cupid and Æsop at the entrance to the maze is fully justified: folly leads us in, and wisdom helps us out.

These two statues are still in existence in one of the cellars in the palace, where I saw them covered with dust and cobwebs. They yet show traces of colouring that give them a rather terrifying aspect of life in death and of spectral reality. Cupid, half-nude, as beseems a mythological personage, was formerly painted a flesh colour, as children say. The flesh colour has faded and assumed cadaverous hues, like those of a wax figure that has lost its rouge; yet, under the lividness, one readily notes the youthful elegance of the son of Venus, represented like the Greek Eros, under the form of a lad of fifteen.

Æsop is a striking example of realism which one does not expect to meet with in works of a period when the very name of realism was unknown. He is indeed the hunch-backed philosopher, dressed in the Phrygian slave's smock-frock, wearing coarse sandals of rags or cords, and every wrinkle in his ugly face is full of wit. His rags have preserved faint traces of red and blue, and his face, with its ochre and Sienna hues, seems to have been burned, tanned, and baked by the sun. Seen in the light that streams in through the air-hole of the cellar and bathed in deep shadows, the figure is almost living.

Would it not be possible to take these two statues from the cellar in which they are going to ruin and to replace them at the entrance to the Labyrinth? All they need is a little restoring and a fresh coat of paint.

Close by them, in the same place, lies a confused heap of figures of animals cast in lead, some broken, some whole, brackets, ornaments, among others a table wreathed with vine leaves and bunches of grapes, black and red, that came from the fountains in the Labyrinth, thirty-nine in number, which each illustrated one of Æsop's fables. Every one of the ani-

mals in the fables was reproduced life-size and with its proper colouring. Two monkeys, taken from one of these fountains, less carefully studied out and less zoölogically correct than Decamps', but most freely and cleverly wrought out, are now grimacing on the balcony of the Curator of the Museum. It is plain from their backward-thrown attitude, their necks bent back, their swollen cheeks and their distended jaws, that they formerly spurted into the air a jet of water that splashed down on their noses. The other groups were probably melted down at the time of the Revolution.

It is much to be regretted that this bosquet was suppressed, for it would have shown that there existed at the beginning of Louis XIV's reign, far more fancifulness and love of colour than is supposed. It was only little by little that taste became purer and tended to the regularity, occasionally so monotonous, which it afterwards attained. Art in the days of Louis XIII was very capricious, and yielded but unwillingly to the rule of Classicism. It was rather inclined to Spanish pomposity and Romanticist picturesqueness, and the transition from one style to another never takes place abruptly; a certain amount of familiarity was still admissible, and Louis XIV had not yet said, on seeing

the masterpieces of the Flemish school, "Remove these grotesques!"

The Labyrinth was designed by Le Nôtre, or Le Nautre, as the name was then spelt, and consisted of a complicated network of walks cutting each other at right angles or forming curves that were so planned as to lead the pedestrian astray even had he possessed the ball of thread held by the god of Love. At each turn stood a fountain in fine rocaille, on which was realistically represented one of Æsop's fables, the subject being told in an inscription in four lines, engraved in golden letters upon a bronze plate painted black. The verses were by Benserade; they have been collected, and, truth to tell, are not worth much. For the matter of that, it was no easy task to condense a fable of Æsop's into a quatrain.

Just inside the entrance was seen the group of the Great Owl and the Birds. At the back of the fountain rose a half-dome of trellis-work and stone, serving for a roosting-place to a multitude of birds: parrots, jays, blackbirds, doves, linnets, finches, bullfinches, every one of them spurting water out of their beaks at the great owl, perched upon a stone in the middle of a basin of rock-work, and surrounded by

aquatic birds: cranes, storks, and herons, that were also spurting water. The idea was assuredly a pretty conceit for a fountain, and the birds, painted in the brightest colours, must have been very effective when thus seen through the trellises, the greenery, and the diamond spray of the flowing waters. The owl had excited the indignation of the feathered tribe "by its lugubrious hooting and its ugly plumage." The bronze explanatory plate bore the following quatrain, written, as well as all the others, in rondeau form, by the author of Ovid's "Metamorphoses."

"The birds seeing the owl in broad daylight appear, Upon it dashed because of its aspect hideous. Perfect as one may be, None escapes a dig."

In the centre of the Labyrinth rose a pavilion or cabinet, "the design of the ceiling being most pleasant to behold," say contemporary descriptions. The last fountain met with, which indicated that the difficulties of the maze had been successfully overcome, was called the Geese and the Poodle.

"A poodle pursued some geese, But came back a wiser and a sadder dog. Some desires are as useless as they are profane; Never be sure of aught but what you hold."

Leclerc has engraved a charming series of etchings of these fables. The frontispiece of a little book of that day, to which I refer in the writing of this article, gives an interesting bit of information concerning the manners of the time. A young lady is issuing from the Labyrinth gate, drawn in a wheelbarrow by an athletic porter. She is fanning herself coquettishly as she flirts with a dandy walking by her side and speaking sweet things to her. She is preceded by a runner, a nimble Basque dressed in a short jacket, a toque with a feather, a belt with falling ends drawn tight round his waist, and carrying a tall silver-topped stick. At Stuttgart I saw a runner, no doubt the last of his race, dressed exactly like that, who made use of his stick to lift up or vault over obstacles, as *toreros* use their goads. Strange indeed was that figure from the past turning up in our own days. These runners always preceded carriages, and people who are familiar with Egyptian sayces and Spanish zagalas will feel no surprise at this.

Besides, the use of wheelbarrows was common in the times of Louis XIV, and the Court was in the habit of moving about the gardens carried along very comfortably in this fashion. One of the places best adapted to the wheelbarrow parade was the round of the Great

Basin, called the Royal Isle or the Isle of Love. This basin was not less than eight hundred and thirty-one feet long by three hundred and eighty-three wide. A causeway divided it from another basin, with a turf glacis and of the shape of a fan, which was occasionally called the Mirror. Five jets of water, the central one of which rose to a height of forty-seven feet, shot up from the Great Basin, on which floated a galiot and swans swam about. The vast space was set in a portico of arcaded trees, in front of which stood regular rows of yews clipped to a point. At the back rose two colossal statues of the Farnese "Hercules" and the Farnese "Flora," which had been copied at Rome by Cornu and Raon. Round the Mirror stood four antique marble statues: "Julia Moesa," "Venus emerging from the Bath," "Jupiter Stator," and "Julia Domna." The decoration was completed by two handsome white marble vases by Lefebvre and Legeret.

It is of no use to look for the basin of the Royal Isle, for it was filled up, and replaced under Louis XVIII by an English landscape garden called the King's garden. The tradition goes that this garden is a copy of that at Hartwell House, which Louis XVIII inhabited during his stay in England, but there is no foundation

for the statement. The Basin of the Mirror has been preserved, but the appearance of the place has been completely altered, and the Great King would not know it again. He would, however, recognise the Ball-Room, although the steps of the amphitheatre on which the spectators sat have disappeared, the Serancolin marble flagging and veneering having been removed, the candelabra that supported the tapers having lost all their gilding, and millstones having in many places been substituted for the delicate rocaille and the precious shells of the cascade. The Great King's Court might even now dance there one of those *pas* or *entrées de ballet* for which Benserade wrote librettos and verses.

XXI

A VISIT TO THE RUINS

JUNE, 1871.

I

I WAS very anxious and yet I dreaded to see Paris again, just as one dreads seeing a beloved friend after an illness lest his features should have been altered beyond recognition by suffering. What is there left of that beauty of Paris, once so splendid, that excited the admiration and the envy of the world? What is there left of its former expression on the scarred face and marked by such horrible burns? Would it not be better to retain intact in one's memory the grand, noble, and lovely appearance it had before the disaster? Unquestionably it would, yet man feels the need of making sure of his misfortunes, of gazing long upon his woe, of making it out in all its parts for himself. He insists on seeing what he knows to be, though it is scarcely credible even in the face of so much testimony to its truth, and then the curiosity of the horrible seizes upon one resistlessly, and after hav-

ing stood out for a time, one ends in going "the round of the ruins" like everybody else.

So, free again at last, I was off by the Left Bank Railway. After having been so long a prisoner, compelled to gaze upon one and the same view, one experiences a strange sensation as the country is traversed rapidly, and the bridges, plains, hills, the cloud archipelagoes, the villages, and the white villas scattered amid the greenery fly past. The shortest of excursions assumes the proportions of a voyage. And can it be true that one is about to meet once more the loved ones from whom one has been parted for so many months!

The day was dull, although it was mid-June. Great misshapen clouds, filled with water to bursting, great rain-skins ready to empty themselves out, were dragging their slow length along the horizon, and the veiled sun gave out but a diffused light that made no contrast between the shadows and the lighted parts.

Under the lowering sky the pretty village of Asnières, filled with its tea-gardens, the seaport of Parisian amateur oarsmen, riddled, torn, smashed in, transformed into a heap of whitish rubbish, looked singularly lugubrious, for there is nothing so painful to behold

as a pleasure resort that has been smitten with disaster.

When I got out of the carriage, the rain was falling in the form of melting mist, fine and penetrating. There were few people in the streets, a few cabs that answered not to the pedestrian's call, deep silence as in Venice, the horseless city, and on the faces of men and women an expression of bewilderment or stupor that reminded me of the days of the cholera. Everybody went by close to the walls with hasty or timid steps, no doubt through the habit they had acquired of bewaring of shells and other missiles. On the walls of the houses were great torn places of a fresh, crude white; in the window-sashes, on the panes left intact, strips of paper pasted on and crossed in every direction to deaden the effect of the vibration due to artillery fire; the air-holes of the cellars and basement rooms had been bricked or plastered up for fear of the *pétroleuses*, — a dreadful word unforeseen by the makers of dictionaries; but then, horrors hitherto unknown call for frightful neologisms. The greatness of the destruction was felt rather than seen as yet, and my heart sank within me as at the near approach of something terrible.

A VISIT TO THE RUINS

The Madeleine, the Greek temple out of its element, that at times, in the moonlight, has a vague resemblance to the Parthenon, exhibited on the damaged fluting of its Corinthian pillars the marks of bullets. The saints, male and female, standing sentry under the portico, had been wounded, not seriously, and the lines of the monument were unchanged. It bore only the cicatrices of an impious combat, but of a combat after all. And farther on the real, the savage, the infernal destruction began.

In the Rue Royale, incendiarism had continued the work done by the shells and cannon-balls. Houses ripped up showed their interiors just like corpses cut open. The flooring from every story had crashed down on top of the cellar arches; charred beams, twisted bars of iron, stairs leading into the void, like the fanciful stairs in Piranesi's architectural visions, avalanches of building stone or bricks, great pieces of walls on which the arrangement of the rooms could still be seen, with the paper on the walls, the mantelpieces, and a bit of furniture spared by the flames — such was the sight that painfully shocked the beholder. But for the huge staying-timbers, the calcined débris would have fallen prone into the street, crushing to

death both passers-by and sight-seers; human activity, however, had already set to work and was clearing away the rubbish, tearing down tottering walls, staying up those that might be utilised; and these were not frequent, alas! It would not be so bad if the loss were merely one of materials, but under the débris lie buried many corpses.

On the Place de la Concorde most of the rostral pillars have been hit and curiously smashed through. Antonin Moine's Nereids have been badly mauled, and the statue of the City of Lille has had its head and its torso carried away by the shells; it is literally cut into two. The statues on the Place seemed to be looking with their staring white eyes, with the mute compassion of stone, upon their poor mutilated sister, and they ought to have retained the band of black crape that had been bound round their temples on the Three Days of Woe.

In some miraculous fashion the Luxor obelisk stood intact upon its gray granite base. The hieroglyphs cut deep upon its sides must surely contain some talismanic formula that has protected it. The gods of ancient Egypt must have watched over it. Only its rose colour, rain-washed, looked sickly; it was plain that Ammon

Râ, the sun that governs the worlds, had not gilded it with its beams for a long time.

A few steps farther I found myself at the Ministry of Finance. Twenty days before I was standing on the plateau of Courbevoie, when the fire, bursting through the roof, exploded in the sky like a volcano, sending up a vast pillar of smoke, the flames in which could not be seen on account of the brilliancy of the sunshine. Presently a prodigious quantity of burned papers fell to the ground like black snow; on most of them could still be made out acknowledgments, receipts, or other official formulæ. They were the *lapilli* of the Vesuvius let loose in the city.

The façade of the Ministry of Finance, as it fell into the street of Rivoli, formed a disorderly tumble of blocks of stones, such as are seen in the beds of Alpine torrents. The falling of the wall laid bare the interior of the building, and through the mighty breach could be seen vistas, mazes, and superimpositions of arcading that recalled the Coliseum at Rome. Through the openings the heavens showed in places and made the likeness the closer. The flames, the smoke, and the combustion of the chemical products used for the purpose of setting fire to the place, had coloured the

ruins with gray, tawny, reddish, bronzed, and brown tones, strange hues that made the ruins look older and imparted to them an appearance of antiquity. Farther on, a perpendicular wall, like the face of a precipice half filled up by an avalanche, remained standing, with the openings of its windows and the remnants of its floors. Curiously enough, there hung from one of these windows a blue-silk blind, in perfect condition, which had actually escaped being burned in the incandescent furnace that calcined stone and melted metals. So one finds occasionally on the edge of a crater, among the ashes and scoriæ, a miraculously preserved little azure flower. Meanwhile the busses were rolling along, almost grazing the groups of passers-by, who had stopped, dumb with horror, in front of the lamentable sight. The invincible life of Paris, that nothing can kill, was little by little resuming its course; neither the siege nor the Commune could destroy it. The city, which some call frivolous, had resisted famine, bombardment, conflagration, foreign war, and civil war. It was believed to be utterly cast down, and forever dead, but it is already raising itself on its elbow, casting a firm glance around, and shaking off its shroud of ruins.

A VISIT TO THE RUINS

As I turned the angle of the Rue Castiglione, by the Ministry of Finance, I experienced a feeling of anxious curiosity, yet I scarcely dared look in front of me, — I had so long been accustomed to see on the summit of the bronze column the imperial Stylites, first in his frock-coat and little three-cornered hat, and more recently draped like a Cæsar, with a Winged Victory in his hand like a god of antiquity. I was well aware that the barbarians of the Commune had made that spiral of battles which rose into the heavens fall from its pedestal, and that they had cast down upon a bed of manure the vast glory of which France had the right to be proud. But I was as amazed as though I had been ignorant of all this when I failed to perceive in the centre of the Place Vendôme the gigantic exclamation point in bronze set on the summit of the First Empire's sonorous phrase. The eye does not easily reconcile itself to such changes in the aspect of places, and on the retina of mine, as on a daguerreotype plate insufficiently cleaned, remained imprinted the black silhouette now absent.

The pedestal, with its eagles displayed at its four corners, its *bassi-relievi* representing armours, helmets, uniforms, and military emblems, its door with the

bronze trellising, similar to that of a cellar, remained standing on the Place. It might have passed for the tomb of a hero, designed in severe style, and composed of conquered trophies, upon which the torus of the fallen column figured like a huge funeral wreath placed there by an army in mourning.

The statue of the Cæsar, which had fallen such a distance, had already disappeared; it had been picked up and put in a safe place. The head had broken away from the trunk, as it fell, but had not rolled very far, so that the dark-green colossus, the size of which could now be seen, resembled the body of a decapitated Titan. Near-by lay, like a huge buckler, the top of the small lantern that formed the top of the column, and on which rested the feet of the statue. In its fall the mighty bronze tube had broken and cracked in more than one place, scattering abroad its white stone entrails. Inside the thin layer of metal there was a whole mountain of stone. Workmen were busy unfastening the pieces of the ascending bas-relief, which still adhered to the axis, broken into fragments, and the plates, as the hammer smote them, resounded with a formidable noise like the clang of armour in battle.

The column is soon to be re-erected; the missing portions of the bas-relief can easily be replaced by making use of the drawings made at the time and which still exist. Nowadays we love and appreciate scrupulous care applied to the restoration of buildings. So in the course of a few months a column identical with the former one shall rise again upon its pedestal, which has been preserved, in all its triumphant height, for it is puerile to blot out history. By and by people will refuse to believe that raging madness actually fastened hawsers to the trophy of our victorious campaigns in order to drag it into the mud, and they will wonder whether it be true that the glorious column did actually disappear for a time from the horizon of Paris.

Close by a most painful surprise awaits one. The flames set by the torches of Hell have destroyed the Tuileries. All that is left are the main walls and the tall monumental chimneys that rise above the ruins, blackened by fire, cracked and threatening to fall. The old sky-line of the palace has vanished; the dome-shaped roof of the Clock Pavilion, which topped the elegant design of Philibert Delorme, has disappeared.

The roofs of the other buildings have also been destroyed and have crashed down into the blaze.

Through the window openings, from which the sashes and the panes are gone, one can see the empty interior of the buildings where, henceforth, owls and birds of night alone will be able to find a lodging. The ruin accomplished in one day is total, and three or four hundred years could not have achieved more. Time, always accused and unjustly called *tempus edax rerum* — "Time, the eater of things," is not nearly as skilful a destroyer as man. But for the savage bestiality of barbarians, nearly every monument of antiquity would have come down to us. Time merely caresses marble with its discerning hand; it completes the beauty of buildings by putting upon them its own patina; it is human violence that is the all-destroyer. Of the Pavilion de Marsan the outer crust alone is left; the interior is gone. The Pavilion de Flore, at the other end of the palace, has, by comparison, suffered less; the roof alone has been burned; the stone-work of the new building resisted the flames, and on the river side Carpeaux' life-like sculptures still animate the façade. The fire broke its way here and there through the roofs of the buildings along the quay, but by a miracle, the conflagration stopped at the point where begins the gallery of the Louvre; the fiery element, less brutal

than man, recoiled from the destruction of masterpieces; it would not reduce to a little heap of ashes all these wonders and annihilate mankind's patents of nobility. It was filled with horror at the thought of such a profanation, but on the Rue de Rivoli, in the Louvre Library, goaded by every means that modern science, when it is turned from its proper ends, has placed at the service of crime, it was forced to consume rare volumes, precious manuscripts, authentic drawings, and, issuing out of the windows, to soil with its smoke the impassible caryatids of the façade which, with bent brows and fixed stare, gaze like sombre Nemeses upon the elegant architecture of the Palais-Royal, devastated, half-ruined, and showing through its blackened pillars, as through the nave of a strange church, the great well of the monumental staircase lighted by a great rose window.

II

No less painful was the sight on the left bank of the Seine. At the entrance of the Rue du Bac were masses of blackened and smoking ruins. The inhabitants had already made their way back and were seeking shelter under the ceilings licked by the flames, and

walking cautiously upon the hastily propped-up floors. Groups formed in front of the doors and entered into conversation, discussing the different phases of the struggle, and holding those open-air pow-wows that precede and follow catastrophes.

Peculiarly sinister was the aspect of the Rue de Lille, from the point where stands Blot's restaurant. It was deserted along its whole length, like a street in Pompeii, and illumined by the livid gleams of the sun setting behind rain-laden clouds. The way the houses were torn along their crests, their roofs and cornices having been destroyed, suggested the effect of the sudden eruption of a volcano by the extent, the rapidity, and the simultaneity of the damage done. The disaster that had overwhelmed them seemed due to a natural catastrophe rather than to the hand of man, who was not hitherto suspected of possessing such powers of swift destruction, and the eye found it hard to reconcile itself to this abrupt change in the appearance of the street.

There was nothing left of the house at the corner of the street, where lived Mérimée, but the outer walls half buried under heaps of charred beams, calcined stone, and débris of all kinds. The carefully selected

and valuable library has been, I am told, entirely destroyed, and it may be that a companion to "Carmen" and "Colomba" flew from the furnace in a burst of sparks. Happily, Mérimée died at Cannes during the course of the first siege and he was spared the grief, so poignant to a man of letters, of learning that his beloved books and manuscripts had been reduced to ashes.

The street was closed, but I was allowed to pass the barrier and I resolutely proceeded down the Way of Desolation, at the risk of being hit on the head by stones falling from cornices. A silence as of death brooded over the ruins; it could not have been more profound in the necropolis of Thebes or in the pits of the Pyramids. No rumble of carriages, no call of children, no song of bird, no distant sound; only a gloomy, grim, supernatural silence one dared not break by speaking aloud; and so I went on, mute by my comrade's side, down the centre of the street, as if it were a mountain pass which one traverses noiselessly lest an avalanche be started. My soul was filled with bitterest woe in the shadowy twilight, and Albrecht Dürer's great melancholy bat outspread its sombre wings in the pale sky into which still rose from the ruins faint vapours like the steam from solfataras.

And I said to myself, astounded and discouraged: "So the civilisation of which we were so proud actually contained in itself savagery so awful! We might have supposed that after the lapse of so many centuries the wild beast in man had been tamed more thoroughly. Where is the Orpheus, the van Amburgh, *doctus lenire tigres*, that shall master it?"

The ruins, due to the fierceness of the conflagration, assumed the strangest shapes and outlines: they were torn, eroded, fallen away in the most unexpected fashion. Here were dolmens, there pylons, elsewhere gables dentelated like Dutch roofs, windows enlarged and gaping like the breaches in a rampart, walls cracked up and down, the open wound resembling the grin of sardonic laughter, a maze of blackened angles simulating the sky-line of a mediæval city in a Romanticist vignette. In places one could see the livid light of the heavens through the roofless, floorless houses, and strange indeed is a bit of sky set in the doorway of what was once a bedroom.

The sculptures on the façades, the ornamented bracketing of the balconies and the mouldings of the cornices of the houses that had not been wholly destroyed, were broken, smashed, smitten by fire, and proved, by the

marks that every one bore, how carefully and methodically the havoc had been wrought. Little is left of the elegant mansions, of the comfortable homes in which taste was united to luxury.

Meanwhile night had fallen and added its own sadness to the woe around, making the vast mass of ruins lugubrious and grim. Their shapes became dim in the shadows and assumed a spectral look. Imagination took the place of reality as the enlargement and metamorphoses effected by the darkness grew, and it seemed as if the sides of the street, with its pools of rain water, were lined with a range of dismantled robber-castles along an imaginary Rhine.

I was so utterly cast down that I could not bring myself to look at the Cour des Comptes and the Palace of the Legion of Honour, and after a light supper I made my way back to my little lodging in the Rue de Beaune, where I had starved so often, and prepared to resume my sorrowful round the next day.

The Cour des Comptes, rising on the banks of the Seine, looks like a Venetian palace, especially when the oblique rays of the setting sun strike its façade, and it would not be out of place on the Grand Canal near the Palazzo Grassi, the style of which it recalls. Its

elegant silhouette on the quay has not been materially changed by the fire, the building having preserved its lines; but it looks as if three or four centuries had passed over it; it has grown old suddenly; flame and smoke have put upon it in a few hours the patina of time.

Thanks to the kindness of a friend of mine, auditor in the Cour des Comptes, the palace gates were opened to me and I was able to enter the devastated place. Swayed by a feeling which every artist will blame me for, but will readily understand, I was first and foremost struck by the *beauty* of the ruins. No doubt any other impression would have been more natural: grief, anger, hatred, the desire for vengeance; yet it was involuntary admiration that filled me at the sight of the court surrounded with two stories of porticoes the mutilated architecture of which, in consequence of the damage it had suffered, had acquired a grand and tragic aspect. The former slight hardness and coldness of the lines had been improved by the breaks in, and the intersequences of, the acroters and the balusters, by the fall of a cornice, by the breaking away of a wall that laid bare an arcade opening out on the heavens. Possibly art might learn something from the rude teaching of fire which gives

light and air to buildings too compactly set. The divine charm of the Parthenon would be lost were the opening filled up that lets a spread of blue within the golden whiteness of its marble.

To wander about ruins is as interesting as to read a novel by Ann Radcliffe, and so I went along passages strewn with rubbish, looked eagerly into rooms that had lost their doors, into chambers the wainscotting of which had been torn off or reduced to ashes, Council halls on the walls of which were still faintly discernible traces of paintings. In the midst of such chaos one tries to put everything back in its place, to restore the appearance of the building, and to recall the ghosts of days gone by. Imagination evokes what has been but recently destroyed, and delights in the task. Then there is some peril in such a visit. The void between one landing and another must be crossed on a bending plank; heaps of rubbish that give way when stepped on have to be climbed; stairs, their railings gone and their steps missing or disjointed like the steps of the Propylæa, have to be ascended, an arch that threatens to fall has to be traversed, and as one clutches at the calcined stones they crumble into powder at the touch. My friend, the auditor at the Cour des

Comptes, being as bold as he is agile, overcame all these obstacles, and went right round the gallery on the first floor trying to reach his former office of which he could see the mantelpiece, stuck like a bracket against the wall fifty feet in the air, but the wells of the staircases had been turned into gaping voids that could be reached by bats alone.

I was very anxious to ascertain whether, in the great staircase of the palace, anything was left of the mural paintings, the work of my dear and ever-regretted friend Théodore Chassériau. He attached great importance to this vast work, which he had carried out with the feverish activity and the rapid persistency that marked everything he did, just as if he had had a presentiment of his approaching death, and turned time to account like a man who knows that his hours are few.

The gate was torn away and all twisted up, and down the lower steps streamed and rattled a flood of stones fallen from the upper floors. At the foot of the stairway, in the darkest part, the artist had painted in grisaille, in a light tone and soft relief, on the left, a sort of "Penserosa," bending with thoughtful brow over a book open before her, and on the right, horses and warriors. The one represented Thought, the

other Action. These paintings, that are like the blank pages bearing merely a fleuron or a title, which are put at the head of poems, are neither burned nor damaged; they remain pallid, as they were intended to be, and still visible in the penumbra like white phantoms haunting a ruin.

I ascended as far as I could up the torrent of rubbish, and discovered the great composition "Peace," so noble in style and so masterly in execution, which filled up the whole upper wall of the staircase. But alas! in what a condition! blackened, bulged, constellated with blisters by the heat, covered with soot by the smoke, yet the main lines still recognisable. Under a triple layer of yellow varnish I made out the lovely group in which Chassériau had symbolised the Arts of Peace: "Tragedy," "Dancing," "Music," "Lyric Poetry," representing, dressed in allegorical costumes, Rachel, Carlotta Grisi, and other artists of the day whose reputation, talent, or beauty made them worthy of forming part of this new Parnassus. The dark glance of "Tragedy" and the rosy smile of "Dancing" had not been greatly injured by the flames.

The painting representing "War," which formed the contrast and the companion to "Peace," upon the

other wall, has suffered horribly and must be considered as irrecoverably lost.

The group of "Neptune and Amphitrite," the proud port of which recalls the mythological paintings of Giulio Romano, is yet discernible at the back of the landing, but the work is none the less destroyed in its ensemble, and the artist's memory is thus deprived of a splendid proof of his talent, nay, let me say of his genius, which was not sufficiently appreciated by his contemporaries.

As I gazed upon the disaster that had befallen these works, I felt the bitterness of woe caused by the irreparable. A palace may be rebuilt, but a vanished masterpiece, a painting swallowed up in a whirl of fire and smoke are destroyed as utterly as a soul that cannot be reconstituted. It was not the body of my friend that had been consumed upon that infamous pile, but his very soul.

The ceiling painted by Gendron, in which allegory wove and unwove in the blue heavens wreaths of white and rosy women exquisite in their grace, has fallen into the incandescent gulf that opened beneath it. Eugène Delacroix' "Justinian," a magnificent painting endowed with the tawny splendour of a Byzantine mosaic,

has been destroyed also, as well as paintings by Paul Delaroche and many other valuable works.

In the court-yard, borne about by a faint breath of air, were fluttering little bits of burned paper, black butterflies of the conflagration hovering over the ruins in a luminous beam.

Not far off the Palace of the Legion of Honour exhibited its elegant ruins, with its windows so happily proportioned, its delicate *bassi-relievi*, its busts set in oval niches, and all the dainty architecture of which it is the most perfect specimen, horribly damaged and bearing the fiery scars of conflagration. Yet, as the building is but one story high, it will not be difficult to rebuild and restore it to its original condition. This is a task which every one of the men who wear the red spark on their breasts will not allow to be discharged by others, for it is the duty of the members of the Legion of Honour to restore the Temple of Honour which on festal nights set its glorious star amid the stars of heaven, and showed from afar shining softly yet proudly as the Star of the Fatherland.

III

THESE ruins, so suddenly wrought, strangely impress the beholder. It is as if two thousand years had passed away in the course of a single night; as if the poet's dream were realised, who saw Paris a dead city, recognisable only by a few remains scattered on the banks of Seine: the Column prone in the grass and like

"The monstrous clarion of a vanished Titan;"

the broken bulk of the towers of Notre-Dame still rising above the wild growth of vegetation; the Arch of Triumph half ruined, like one of Rhameses' pylons, and its *bassi-relievi* of battles and victories outlined in moss. Happily Paris still lives; the incendiaries applied the torch first to the monuments, but were unable to complete their work of destruction. All the same the feeling experienced in presence of the blackened and calcined ruins is assuredly that time has been anticipated. The distant Future has suddenly become the Present, and offers to the beholder a picture such as one sees only through the misty vistas of dreams.

Every one knows how beautiful is the sky-line of the City, the cradle of Paris, when seen from the Pont

des Arts or the Pont des Saints-Pères. The towers of Notre-Dame, the slender spire of the Sainte-Chapelle, sparkling with gold, the pepper-pot roofs of the Law Courts, the sharp ridge of the Clock Tower, their innumerable projections cutting into the heavens, have preserved, in the centre of the modern city, a Gothic aspect and physiognomy marvellously appropriate to the associations of the old town. For a time, when the mighty clouds of smoke shrouded the picturesque and grandiose group of buildings, there was reason to fear that the Sainte-Chapelle, the masterpiece of Pierre de Montereau, traceried like a golden reliquary, would be consumed — a dreadful loss! — in that vast furnace, but by a happy chance that would in olden days have been termed a miracle, the flames respectfully stopped there, and when the conflagration was extinguished the gilded angel was seen still poised upon the shining spire. The fire died out of itself in the nave of Notre-Dame, unable to affect the granite pillars meant to last to all eternity. But the new Law Courts designed by Duc have greatly suffered, internally especially, for the robust Doric pillars on the façade still stand upright, in spite of the jets of burning petroleum with which they were flooded. The remarkable paint-

ings by Lehmann and Bonnat have perished, and the handsome building, but recently completed and which had gained for its designer the prize of a hundred thousand francs, will have to be rebuilt from roof to cellar. The buildings of the Préfecture de Police are partially burned down. Of course it was to this point that the rioters first proceeded, for there it is that in mysterious archives is kept the Golden Book of crime, and every factionist expects to destroy the record of his own past by the mere act of tearing the page on which it is written. On that book are inscribed by anonymous hands thefts, forgeries, murders, infamies of all sorts, the years spent in prison or the penitentiary. Every man out of his class and open to suspicion has his record there. At a given moment the evil done in darkness reappears livid and hideous, and in the new tribune is recognised the former spy. At the Préfecture de Police they know where the carrion is, and it therefore becomes the *delenda Carthago* of the insurrection.

Notwithstanding the serious damage done, the external appearance of these buildings is capable of being preserved or restored, and the passer-by, as he crosses the Seine just beyond the Carrousel gates, will still

enjoy that splendid view, unrivalled in the world, which the "Illustration" has adopted for its heading, as characteristic of Paris, and at the other end of the quay he will still be able to see the time upon the azure dial of the square tower under its fleur-de-liséd awning.

On the right bank the unfortunate Théâtre-Lyrique has filled up the cup of its ill-luck with disaster. It has been burned down, while the Châtelet has remained almost intact; the flames as they burst out shivered the sashes and made broad black marks on the walls. And now the valiant company, after struggling energetically against ill-luck and having done good service in the cause of music, is on the street. Happily Paris has inexhaustible vitality, and the Théâtre-Lyrique will rise again from its ashes in which the spell that an evil eye cast upon it, will prove to have been consumed. Then Fate, satisfied at last, will cease to pursue it.

I shall not speak in detail of the houses on the Rue de Rivoli that have been smashed by artillery and burned with fire, for variety in destruction is limited; evil itself is not infinite, and there are not many ways for a house to be devoured by flames and to fall into ruins. It is always walls ripped apart, window openings enlarged and shapeless, avalanches of stone and

rubbish, queer mazes of beams fallen one upon another and bringing down with them roofs and floors, chimney stacks rising amid the ruins like blackened obelisks, the interiors of rooms revealed by the fall of a partition, and showing up like a stage scene, or an architectural section, and all manner of accidents which it is impossible to describe in writing, but which are preserved in the illustrated papers. Besides, in front of every ruin in the least picturesque are to be seen standing the vans that serve photographers for dark-rooms, and the pictures thus taken will become historical documents of incontestable authenticity. But for them, who, once Paris shall have repaired its losses, could possibly believe in the monstrous deeds of the anonymous imitators of Erostratus?

Let us push on to the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville, where devastation has displayed itself in all the grandeur of the horrible. One is smitten with sorrow and despair at the sight of the young ruin wrought by the hand of man; the frenzy of abominable sectaries has destroyed in one day a building that would have lasted for centuries.

The fire has spared nothing; it has passed everywhere like a conqueror, devouring, calcining what it

left standing, and directed in its blind fury by an infernal will. Had demons set to work they could not have improved upon it. On the side of the Place de Grêve (Place de l'Hôtel de Ville) the elegant façade, formerly topped by the slender campanile characteristic of Town Halls, stretched out in a lamentable state of dilapidation, cracked, burst open, the jagged edges of the breaches showing out against the sky, and coloured with startling hues from the ardent palette of the conflagration. On the façade the statues of scholars, artists, magistrates, ædiles, famous personages, the glory and honour of the City, were twisted into convulsive attitudes like the victims of a vast auto-da-fe on the *quemadero* of some old Spanish city. What a hellish delight, what atrocious enjoyment it has been for these perverted souls to burn genius, glory, and honour, in effigy at least! Fortunately History cannot be set on fire with a jet of petroleum; the Present in its madness is unable to suppress the irrevocable Past. It was pitiful to see these poor great men, lacking arms or legs, beheaded, cut in twain, these glorious mutilated beings, striped with black by the burns they have suffered, scratched with white scratches made by projectiles, according to the chances and changes

of battle. On the tympanum of the campanile door could be made out the outline of the bas-relief, torn off, that represented Henry IV on horseback. It looked like the shadow fixed on the wall, by some secret process after the horseman had gone by. Only, the shadow was white.

Henceforth the inhabitants of Paris will not set their watches by the dial, rivalling that of the Exchange, which, at night, shone radiant on the dark front of the building, for the clock has fallen with the ruins of the interior of the belfry.

The court entered through this door looks like the chimney of a volcano; it was indeed the main crater. Ten barrels of powder had been deposited in the thick vaulted cellars. The explosion was so violent that all the projecting parts of the inner walls were razed, and the bronze Louis XIV, which formed a companion to the Francis I, on the landing of the staircase up and down which passed the guests at so many splendid entertainments, was detached from its pedestal and pitched into the very heart of the furnace, itself soon buried under a vast agglomeration of ruins.

Every capital has lost its acanthus leaves, every pillar its flutings, every cornice its modillions, every

window its pediment; the very flesh of the building appears to have been consumed, leaving only the framework of bones.

Led by a guide, I proceeded down a maze of half-cleared passages and halls, through which, although I have often been in the Hôtel de Ville, I could not have found my way unaided, so greatly has the appearance of the place been changed. We went first through the kitchens, the household offices, and the lower stone-flagged rooms in which the fire had found less to destroy than elsewhere, and we thus reached the stairs leading to the reception-rooms. Lamentable indeed was the spectacle of the havoc so wickedly wrought! Of the magnificent drawing-rooms naught is left save the walls, cracked, baked, as in an oven, and scarce retaining the indications of the original arrangements; the gilding is gone, and every minute great pieces of stucco fell away from the walls and crashed on the floors the planking of which has been burned away; the marble of the pillars, turned to lime, has become spongy or friable. Not a trace is left of the former splendour. The Festival Gallery keeps but faint traces, in its arcadings and side recesses, of the paintings by Lehmann. Not one of the great panels on the vaulting is left. The im-

mense work, almost improvised, which did such infinite honour to the artist, fell with the ceiling itself. In the Hall of the Caryatids, next the Festival Gallery, Cabanel's compositions, representing the Twelve Months, can still be made out, in a way, under the soot, the blisters, and the cracks. The main lines can be perceived under the veil of smoke, but the colours, carbonised, have lost their values. "January," of all the months in the year, resisted most stubbornly, and has remained almost intact. A sixteenth-century poet would not have failed to indulge in punning remarks and antitheses about "icicles" and "flames" and the combat between Vulcan and Winter, in which the god of cold had won the victory. These lovely paintings were to be reckoned amongst the most graceful works of the master.

As I walked through the deserted rooms, I felt cracking under my feet fragments of bright blue porcelain; they were the débris of the State service. I also came upon scoriæ of curious appearance, seemingly vitrified, and cast into the oddest of shapes, which had originally been cut-glass melted and reduced to a paste by the intensity of the heat. The iron trusses of the ceilings had been twisted up in the hellish furnace like branches of green wood, and were hanging

inside the dismantled rooms, looking like the rigging of a ship that has been blown up.

After many a turn, and ascending stairs the steps of which have been temporarily replaced by boards, we reached a door that opens out upon an abyss three stories deep, the floors having given way under the fierce fire and forming on the ground-floor a chaos of rubbish. On the side of the huge wall, which rises without a break from the foundations to the roof, now gone, shows the monumental mantelpiece surmounted by the portrait of Napoleon I, by Gérard, of which the frame only has withstood the flames, and in which was set the rock-crystal medallion, representing Napoleon III, a masterpiece by Froment Meurice. On the ceiling of this hall, which fell into the abyss, a flaming lake of petroleum, was formerly seen in all its radiance the "Apotheosis of Napoleon I," by Ingres, a marvellous painting, or a giant cameo, rather superior in style, perfection, and beauty, to the Sainte-Chapelle agate, the subject of which is "Augustus received among the Gods." It is an irreparable disaster! A masterpiece that enabled modern art to rival the art of antiquity, and that proved human genius had not degenerated since the days of Phidias and Apelles is now lost for-

ever, reduced to ashes, vanished beyond recall! Surely they must feel satisfied, the senseless and ferocious barbarians who sent Homer to the Blind Asylum and longed to destroy Raphael; all the mad iconoclasts, inveterate enemies of Beauty, which is the highest aristocracy; the monstrous Calibans, sons of the Fiend and of Sycorax the witch, always ready to lick Trinculo's boots in return for a drink of liquor, misshapen beings compounded of mud and blood, diabolically perverse natures doing evil for the love of evil, amazing wickedness itself by their crimes, for it cannot understand them, and reaping no other profit from their deeds than the execration of the whole world! They will not even enjoy the undesirable fame of Erostratus, who, in order to secure immortality, burned down the temple of Diana at Ephesus, for human memory will refuse to remember their accursed names.

Equally hideous is the destruction in the other pavilion. The paintings of Eugène Delacroix in the Hall of Peace, paintings displaying such fecundity of invention, such magnificence of colour, are now but a memory. In vain would one look on the tympana of the arcades for the "Twelve Labours of Hercules," at once so antique and so modern, in which mythology

gained such intensity of Romanticist life under the painter's fiery brush. The Commune raised for the demigod a pyre larger and hotter by far, too, than that on Œta from which he sprang once more to Olympus. The hero who slew the Nemean lion, the wild boar of Erymanthus, the Lernæan hydra, the Stymphalian birds, who mastered the Cretan bull and the horses of Diomedes, fed on human flesh, who drew the three-headed dog from Hades, who delivered Hesione from the marine orc, would perchance have hesitated had Eurystheus commanded him to combat the monsters of the Commune.

The Hall of the Zodiac, which contained L. Coignet's paintings, is entirely gone, as is also the Francis I Hall, with its fine mantelpiece, the carvings on which were the work of John Goujon. On the frieze of the dining-room may be seen a few traces of Jadin's little genii playing with the attributes of hunting and fishing; along one of the passages, Hubert Robert's paintings, somewhat protected from the flames, have been merely scorched a little, but the views of the environs of Paris, due to the most famous landscape painters of the present day, are as thoroughly burned as if they had been cast into the crater of Ætna. The enu-

meration of all the art losses caused by the fire would fill a catalogue.

While I was traversing the great ruin, the clouds had turned hell-black and sulphurous-gray, and were big with electricity and storm. They swept over the roofless building like great birds of night fleeing before the gale. Into the hypethral halls suddenly lighted up by livid glare of lightning, the rain was falling driven by the wind, while the thunder roared with sinister sounds that were re-echoed by the empty depths of the fallen building. To regain the entrance, I had to go around and at times to pass through pools of water and lakelets collected in the passages and courts. The storm and the ruins harmonised superbly.

XXII

THE VENUS OF MILO

JULY, 1871.

AT the beginning of the war, after our first disasters and at the time when the rapid advance of the Germans brought the investment of the great city within the range of possibility, steps were taken to protect from the dangers of a siege and the rapacity of a foe who might prove victorious the richest gems in the casket of the Louvre, the pearls and diamonds of painting that could not be replaced at any price.

The Leonardo da Vincis, the Raphaels, the Titians, the Paolo Veroneses, the Correggios, the Rembrandts were carefully rolled up and sent to Brest ready to be shipped away at the first alarm, the risk of storm being preferred to that of fire. But it was impossible to carry off and put into safety in the same manner the antique statuary; the weight of the marble blocks, the size of the statues, the care involved by their comparative fragility, and the little time left for preparations prevented

their being sent on to join the paintings. So the hall in which they were contained was merely protected, and the windows filled with sandbags in order to make them safe from shells and projectiles.

Among these statues is one envied by all the museums in Europe, and which rightly passes for the highest type of beauty, for the most perfect realisation of the "eternal feminine." Every one knows it is the "Venus of Milo." What troubled both the lovers of art and the curators of our museums was the possibility of the adorable Greek goddess turning Prussian and emigrating from Athens to Berlin. They therefore considered the means of placing her in absolute safety. They caused the wondering Venus to be removed from her pedestal, and they laid her divine marble body within an oaken box, in the shape of a coffin, padded and wadded in such wise that no shock, no jar should damage the perfect contours of her beautiful frame. At dead of night trustworthy men bore the precious coffer to a secret door of the Louvre, where other men were waiting, who, surprised at its weight, carried it off to a place known to them alone.

A grave had been prepared in the substructures of the Préfecture de Police for the glorious resuscitated

being that was once more to return for a time into the darkness and the shadow which had held it for so many centuries. What a superb poem might have been written on the nocturnal funeral journey of the immortal one by Heinrich Heine, the poet of the "Gods in Exile," had he lived until our day! And what ironical apostrophes he would have addressed to the hordes of the followers of Kant and Hegel, whose approach causes a dweller in Olympus to seek a refuge in the Rue de Jérusalem!

A hiding-place was contrived at the end of one of the mysterious passages that run through the depth and thickness of such complex buildings as the Préfecture de Police used to be, and the real extent of which it is difficult to grasp. The wall built up at the end of the passage was stained to give it the appearance of age, and the "Venus" was placed behind it. As this, however, would have been too apparent and too innocent a mode of disguising the place, and as it takes more skill to deceive treasure seekers, whose sagacity equals that of Auguste Dupin, in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Stolen Letter," and "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," portfolios, registers, and documents of some importance, which were such as it would be natural to seek to con-

ceal, were piled up pell-mell between this wall and another which was erected somewhat in front of it. If they did make their way into this dark closet, a false hiding-place masking the real one, the "sounders" would believe they had achieved their purpose when they beheld the pile of papers, and would be satisfied with their booty. Rather an ingenious idea.

The "Venus of Milo" spent the whole of the first part of the siege in this profound seclusion, to the great anxiety of her admirers who were ignorant of her fate. It was a little wearisome, no doubt, but she had got used to silence and darkness during her stay of centuries within the crypt from which she was drawn by Yorgos, the Greek peasant. And besides, she was, like a true immortal, indifferent to the flight of days.

She was just about to be restored in her radiant beauty to her pedestal, the altar of Beauty, and to the love of the artists and poets who had mourned her absence, when came the Commune with its host of barbarians, come, not from the Cimmerian fogs, but sprung up from the Paris pavements like the foul fermentation of subterranean filth. The æsthetics of these fierce sectaries and their contempt for the ideal are well known. In their hands the goddess, had they discovered her,

would have run great risk; they would have sold or broken her up as being a proof of human genius offensive to levelling stupidity. Is not the aristocracy of masterpieces that which most offends envious mediocrity? It is quite natural that the ugly should hate the beautiful.

Fortunately the secret of the translation had been well kept, and the "Venus," during the second as during the first siege, slept peacefully within her hiding-place. But then came the dreadful day when the Commune, "determined to have a funeral pomp worthy of itself," lighted, like tripods set on the way traversed by a funeral cortège, the monuments of Paris, which had been soaked with petroleum. The Préfecture de Police was set on fire, and those who knew where the goddess that had disappeared from the Louvre was concealed became a prey to the liveliest fears. Was the "Venus," after having escaped the Prussian shells, to be burned up in the vast furnace, leaving behind but a handful of lime, the ashes of its marble flesh?

As soon as the victorious army had reconquered the capital and restored Paris to France, they hastened to the Préfecture de Police; how anxiously and filled with what dread forebodings, I need not say. The fallen and

still smoking rubbish was shovelled aside, and under the ruins was found the oaken chest — intact. It had been miraculously preserved by the bursting of a water-pipe. Our "Venus" might now bear the proud motto inscribed upon the façade of the Knight's House at Heidelberg: *Præstat invicta Venus.*

The box containing the goddess was brought back to the Louvre, and deep was the emotion when — the cover having been removed in the presence of the members of a commission appointed for the purpose of certifying to the proceedings — the "Venus" reappeared. Every one bent eagerly forward to behold her. She smiled still, softly bedded, and thus was seen under a new aspect, with the faint tender smile, the lips slightly parted as if to breathe in life, a smile luminously serene, unknown to modern lips and irresistibly charming. Her lovely body was there intact in its perfection; the long stay within the humid hiding-place had in no wise damaged the marble.

The masterpiece was safe. When, however, the goddess was raised for the purpose of being replaced on her pedestal in the centre of the sanctuary of art, in which she occupies the place of honour, the plaster restorations that mask the joints of the pieces of mar-

ble that make up the statue, and which had imbibed the moisture and become softened, broke away,—a slight accident easily repaired by means of a cast that had been made beforehand. But this incident, insignificant in itself, revealed some curious facts which may prove of interest to my readers and will be my excuse for giving a number of small but indispensable details.

The "Venus of Milo" as it stands to-day is composed of five fragments: the head and bust, the draped legs, the two hips, and the chignon. The left foot is lost, and, as well as a portion of the plinth, has been restored in plaster. The "Venus of Milo" was not, as might be believed, originally made out of a single block of marble; it was formed by the super-imposition of two blocks of corallitic marble, a highly prized stone found in Asia Minor only, the veins of which did not exceed two cubits in thickness, and which, according to Pliny, was very like ivory in the closeness and whiteness of its grain. The whole lower portion of the statue, up to the hips, where the drapery stops, as well as the plinth, was carved out of one block. A second block was used for the head and torso, to which were attached the arms, formed of separate pieces, as is proved by the tenon hole still visible near the shoulder. The arms

are not entirely lost, as many believe; fragments of them were found near the "Venus of Milo" and brought to France at the same time as the statue itself. Fruitless and unskilful attempts at restoration have caused these precious remains to be disdained or forgotten, though their authenticity is unquestionable and they might have contributed reliable data concerning the "action" of the statue. I shall return to this point presently, however.

The plaster cement that united the two blocks revealed, by its coming away, wooden trenails a few centimetres thick cut on a bevel and forcing forward the upper block, that is, the head and torso, and causing the goddess to lean slightly to one side. This was the way the statue was arranged on its arrival in Paris, in 1821, during the reign of Louis XVIII, by Bernard Lange, restorer in ordinary to the Louvre at that time; and it is under that aspect it has won the admiration of artists and the public and has become the accepted type of absolute beauty.

Before replacing the "Venus of Milo" in that attitude, which is not entirely its proper one, but which has been settled by so many casts, reductions, photographs, drawings, and engravings, that it is ineffaceably fixed in all

men's minds, the commission caused the two blocks to be placed one upon the other so that their polished surfaces should be in contact and such as they were in their primitive condition. A cast was then taken of the statue set up in the attitude it had in antiquity. This cast is placed near another, taken previously, in a room near the Assyrian museum, and as it stands out against a green drapery background, the two attitudes may be compared. The new pose makes no essential change in the appearance of the celebrated statue, though it does modify it in an appreciable manner, even to a not very observant person.

The Academy of the Fine Arts was summoned for the purpose of discussing this question, one of the most difficult and interesting that could be set to a meeting of sculptors, painters, and critics.

I was allowed to enter the Louvre, and was thus enabled to compare the old and the recent casts, after having long gazed upon the original statue, temporarily replaced in its well known attitude. In the cast in which she is seen set squarely upon the base formed by her hips, the "Venus" appears younger and more slender, but she has not the graceful abandon and voluptuous languor imparted to her by the inclined

pose. She is no longer the "adorably exhausted" Venus of which Goethe speaks; she is more of a goddess and less of a woman. The joy of triumph is visible in all her proud port, which explains the much discussed position of the arms. Raoul Rochette has suggested that she represents Venus embracing Mars, but this suggestion cannot be taken seriously; other experts have seen in her a "Victory" inscribing the name of a hero or of a battle upon a tablet or a buckler supported upon the projecting left knee. The "Winged Victory" at Brescia has an almost similar attitude, and gives countenance to a supposition which the bending forward of the statue makes likely; but the arms, though broken to pieces, still exist and fit accurately the action of the torso now it is set up straight. The "Venus of Milo" held in her left hand the apple awarded by Paris the shepherd to the most beautiful of the three goddesses who had taken him for judge, and with her right hand she was pulling up the drapery, ready to slip down, which she had cast aside for the test.

Perhaps it is the wisest course not to interfere by a change, which is logical, unquestionably, but which would worry the eye, the public's habit of admiration. But I

do wish that there should be carved in marble, from the cast I have seen, and with the most religious care, the latest version of the "Venus of Milo;" endeavouring at the same time to restore the arms, of which the pieces are there, especially the hand holding the apple. There are plenty of talented sculptors in Paris who could carry out this undertaking, which would call for much taste, delicacy, and fidelity. If I were to try to think of one man, I should come upon ten. The completed copy should then be placed not far from the original and somewhat in the background, with timid modesty, as beseems the shadow of a masterpiece. The comparison would be both instructive and interesting, for, after all, Scopas' pupil, who gave that attitude to the masterwork of antique statuary, knew at least as much as Mr. Bernard Lange, restorer to the Louvre.

Having examined the "Venus" at great length, I have come to the conclusion that she is not, as I believed at first, the ideal type of woman, but a woman, a sublime model copied with deep feeling for life, and that here the beautiful is but the splendour of truth.

XXIII

PARIS THE CAPITAL

OCTOBER, 1871.

SO Paris is to be deserted and punished like a naughty child! It is seriously proposed to rob it of its capital's crown, formed of the rays of all the glories, and to reduce it to the condition of a provincial chief town. A strange notion, forsooth! To displace the central star in the heavens of France is much like trying to transpose the sun and to make the planetary system revolve around Mercury or Venus, careless of the immutable laws of gravitation. The thing cannot be done; the largest and heaviest body invariably attracts the asteroids into its orbit by a fatal and unchangeable force. If the law could be set aside for a moment, the mechanism of the universe would get out of gear and fall into nothingness.

It is as difficult to found a capital as to unmake one. It is not a mere question of will. It takes the slow co-operation of ages, a concourse of circumstances that cannot be brought about, but that have to

be submitted to climatic and geographical conditions, facilities for crystallising round a primitive nucleus, a charm that is capable of attracting and retaining, a radiance of which the beams are roads that lead back from the circumference to the centre. A capital is the drawing together of intelligence, activity, power, wealth, luxury, pleasure, accumulated in the most favourable surroundings, a hot-house in which every idea ripens quickly and is served up as an early product, a bazaar to which flow all the products of the world and which always exports more than it receives, a fire flaming night and day, and the reflection of which gives light afar, a museum ever open for the exhibition and the study of the masterpieces of art, a library in which no single book is wanting, even if it is not to be found, so that one may study the human mind in all its pages, a theatre with uninterrupted performances, a ballroom, a reception-hall lighted brilliantly from one end of the year to the other. It is the concentration, the sublimation of the country carried to its highest power, a quintessence of the national strength, of what each province has produced of most intelligent, most energetic, most perfect; for it is to it that repair all men of courage, of ambition, of genius, even at the

risk of burning themselves as moths in a candle. A capital is not an isolated being; the blood of all France flows in the veins of Paris; the phosphorus of its brain is made of the fire of all the minds it absorbs, minds that have hastened to it from the North and the South, the East and the West; for Parisians, real autochthone Parisians, are far less numerous than is believed. Its multiple soul is composed of all those souls one with its own, and represents the whole country, taken in its entirety, far better than the local departmental originalities that have a savour and an accent of their own. It welcomes the men from the provinces; polishes them up and educates them, forms them, teaches them its language, and, little by little initiating them into its secrets, makes accomplished Parisians of them, so that no one would suspect them of being natives of Carcassonne or Landerneau.

The other day there were nine of us at table, in accordance with the Greek precept, "Not fewer than the Graces, not more than the Muses," and it occurred to me to ask the guests where they were born. There was but one Parisian of Paris among them: the others were Parisians only by the quickness of their wit, the deftness of their irony, the fulness of their knowledge,

their thorough acquaintance with life, and the incontestable superiority which can be acquired only in the course of the peripatetic walks in front of the Passage de l'Opéra, when the performances at the theatres are over, and after the evening parties, on which occasions the net results of the day are summed up in a few telling words. Any one would have been taken in, even a Russian, for they were none the less thoroughbred Parisians for having been born at the most distant extremities of France, some of them on the shores of green ocean, others on the borders of the blue Mediterranean, some amid the verdant pastures of Normandy, others on the slopes of the Pyrenees. All of them had in their youth breathed in the vivifying Paris air, that sparkles like gas in which the bubbles of wit keep bursting; they had steeped themselves in the vat of ever fermenting thought; they had listened to that incessant chatter, like the chatter in an aviary, which teaches a man more than the ponderous tomes of the scientists, if it be given him to understand it, and more than all, they had had the opportunity of gauging their ownworth by comparing themselves with real scholars, with real artists, with real statesmen, so that they escaped being fools.

No matter what may be said or done, Paris is not merely the chief town of the Department of the Seine, and inhabited merely by the natives of the place. To seek to reduce it to such a condition is the most idiotic idea that can possibly come into the mind of a people still staggered by the terrible events it has just witnessed. Paris is the synthesis of France; it sums up France in itself and beams upon it. It is the eye, the heart and the brain, the light, the heat, and the thought of France. Who would behead a country and try to make the body live without the head, under the pretext that the latter was a hot head? At all events a hot head is better than none. Saint Denis alone could find his way while carrying his head in his hand, and he was a saint, though even at that he did not go very far, and the angels came to lead him on the road to Heaven.

If Paris were to die out, night would fall on the world, just as if the sun were to vanish and never to reappear. The countless stars in the firmament could not make up for the single light that alone makes day. The highest minds would be obscured; but the other nations in the universe would not permit France to suppress Paris, even if France could do it and Paris were willing. They need it too much; they know it and

they own it; the Czarewitch himself said that Paris kept the world from growing stupid. How dull people would be, did Paris cease to exist; how heavy they would become, and weary and wearisome! Its pleasantry, winged and luminous like a bee in a sunbeam, worries and stings and deflates stupidity; there is a divine brilliancy in its sparkling joy; its lightness is but hovering wisdom, and to reproach it on that account is to reproach a bird for not tramping through the streets wearing a postilion's jack-boots. But for the sarcasm of its mockery ridicule would swell out in turkey-cock fashion and bloom out wholly unconscious of its grotesque deformity. One must come to Paris as the Romans went to Athens if one desires to acquire wit, taste, grace, to learn to talk, to dress, to please. And when the approbation of that arbiter of elegance has been obtained, one may go anywhere and be sure of a welcome. In matters of art it is Paris that is the court of final appeal, and that distributes the crowns. Whoever has not been applauded in Paris, no matter whether London, Saint Petersburg, Naples, Milan, or Vienna have acclaimed him, has but a provincial reputation, and the tenors and divas of song and the ballet are well aware of the fact.

It makes one shudder to think of the extravagant bonnets, the ridiculous gowns, the vulgarly gorgeous jewellery the world would wear if Paris, transformed into a huge Carpentras, no longer set the fashions and ceased to impart its own grace to the merest bit of stuff. Why, it would make women turn ugly!

"Yes, yes," I can hear the sour, the pedantic, the serious-minded, grumble; all the owls that brilliant light dazzles and who almost make one hate common-sense; "we know all that; Paris is frivolous!" (That is the great charge!) "It lacks seriousness." Seriousness! A pretty invention of modern cant used to depreciate the amiable, facile, and clever talents that spend themselves freely; seriousness, the dull refuge of fools as they turn over their lack of ideas. But here again people are mistaken, for Paris is not as frivolous as it looks to be; it does not busy itself solely with fashions, courtesans, races, side-shows, public balls, choice suppers, drives in the Bois de Boulogne — in the days when there was a Bois de Boulogne — theatre gossip, tittle-tattle, the carriage-and-pair of such and such a yellow-haired jade; it investigates, it invents, it creates. It is, above all others, the city of thinkers and workers; of incessant, obstinate,

feverish, daily and nightly work. Nowhere does man make such demand upon his own powers, and any other would break down under the tremendous strain; but the Parisian stands it and goes on. In the wondrous city where all contrasts are to be met with, which is at one and the same time a whirl and a desert, a man may spend millions or live on a shilling a day; he may, if he will, create a Thebaïd for himself or live on the public squares. He is free to work and he is free to enjoy himself. If on some night in February, while the Carnival grows hoarse by dint of shouting "Evohe!" in front of the clusters of gaslights of the Opera, while the wheels of coupés fly over the pavement like flashing disks, while an internal conflagration of tapers makes the windows of fashionable restaurants flame, and while at the close of the performances in the theatres, crowds of spectators pour out into the streets, if you then look up you will see at the uppermost story of the darkened façade there, trembling like a tiny star behind the red stuff of the curtain, the faint light of a lamp, the companion of a student's night-watch. There, as much absorbed in his meditations as Rembrandt's "Philosopher" under his spiral staircase, a thinker, a scientist, is at work, deep in the solu-

tion of a problem on which, it may be, the future of the universe depends; a historian who makes the past live again by his magic spell; or a poet making or undoing the Gordian knot of a drama or sending up to heaven a group of starry strophes. In spite of the apparent dissipation of Paris, Stylites, in the centre of its swarming squares, ever stand on the pillar of their thought or of their dream, careless of the crowd that buzzes at their feet.

Paris, the noble city, is accused of lacking idealism, of doubting the existence of the soul, of believing in nothing, of despising virtue, and of plunging shamelessly into material enjoyments. A slander, if it be not an error. Brutality of appetite is not characteristic of Paris, for Paris is too refined, too elegant, too ingenious, too blasé even, if you will, to descend to coarse pleasures. Its gormandism asks for dainty dishes; its intoxication, for the passing intoxication of Champagne that mingles its silvery foam with the roses that crown the cup. Its vice, not very sensual at bottom, amuses itself fingering laces, ribbons, and flowers, in taking part in gallant conversations, in reeling off paradoxes of sentiment. It prefers a piquant remark to a voluptuous kiss from a pair of pretty lips.

By dint of taste it has, so to speak, spiritualised matter, has stripped it of its grossness and furnished it with wings. It is no longer palpitating meat on a stall, but an aroma, an odour, an essence that evaporates like the perfume of a scent-box. What have we eaten? Often one does not know; but what sauces, what condiments, what a way of dressing and serving dishes! Paris does not indulge in the coarse voracity of other lands; it does not plunge into materialism, for it is too much taken up with the sight of choice forms, of rich toilets, of objects of art, of a wealth of varied and brilliant things that are constantly changing. It is too artistic and too poetical.

It is probably not a paradox to affirm that in no capital city are people as sober, temperate, chaste, and moral as in Paris. No better proof of the fact is needed than the numerous army of mercenaries of pleasure, hetairæ and women of pleasure of all sorts and conditions, testifying to the virtue of the honest women whom love does not even attempt to attack, so certain is it that it would be wasting its time.

So to the pietists and mummers, to the hypocrites of philosophy and politics, to the idiots of every sect, to the would-be Juvenals, to the workers over of worn-

out commonplaces should be left the making of those stale charges in which Paris is compared to the great scarlet woman of Babylon, riding on the beast of the Apocalypse, and such other biblical amenities. That sort of thing smacks of the cad, and is bad form. The city which Henry IV already called "the great city" deserves better treatment; insults of that nature are base ingratitude. Paris, said to be so deeply gangrened by the rottenness of decadence, so enervated by luxury and debauch, so incapable of doing without its comforts, has shown itself heroic without bombast, and alone did not despair of the France that seeks to repudiate it to-day. The city supposed to be so corrupt proved its grandeur, its simplicity, its courage, its sublimity for five long months. It exhibited virtues no one expected of it; inflexible constancy, obstinate resignation, patience in bearing obscure suffering, cold, hunger, sickness, long watches in wind, snow, and rain, its feet in icy mud, at the door of bakers that sold sawdust for flour, and butchers that dealt in putrid flesh. Shut up within its tower, like Ugolino, it refused to surrender and affirmed it had dined well. Epicurean Paris put up with rat-pie and swore it had never tasted anything so good; it laughed at Prussia's Hegelian shells, al-

though they were fired at the true psychological moment, and went to sleep careless of the projectiles that, falling on its bed through a hole in the roof, might make it pass from sleep unto death. The heart of France beat in the breast of starving Paris; it was the sceptic whose faith proved the most robust, and who awaited with firm faith, and at the expense of his own life, a miracle which the provinces did not work.

But, it is urged, Paris has a bad habit of getting up riots, of smashing governments and chucking the pieces to the devil. Alas! governments that can be smashed like that are in a bad way already, and to run away from the capital is not perhaps the best way to secure safety. The Revolution, the other one, the great one, as it is called in the slang of the Café de Madrid, fetched from Versailles the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's boy, to put a red cap on their heads first and afterwards to cut those heads off. That was not the fault of Paris. In every great city there are lions' dens, caverns closed in with thick bars in which are prisoned wild beasts, foul beasts, venomous creatures, all the refractory perversities that civilisation has failed to tame, those that love blood, those whom the conflagration delights as would fireworks, those

who look on rape as love, all the monsters of the heart, all the misshapen souls, that form a loathsome population, which the daylight knows not, and that swarms sinister in the depths of subterranean darkness. Some day it happens that a careless keeper forgets his keys in the lock of the menagerie, and the fierce brutes scatter through the terrified city with savage roars. From the open cages spring forth the hyenas of 1793, and the gorillas of the Commune. But that is not the fault of Paris.

No, what must be done is to return in triumph into Paris with flags flying, drums beating, bugles blowing, and palms in hand, in warlike yet pacific array, in proof of strength and trustfulness. Let France, riding on a golden car drawn by white coursers, be courageous enough to come to the abode of that eldest son of hers whom she loves and who is her glory: she will be welcomed by him. A son always loves the mother who trusts unreservedly to him. France without Paris is but a widow who has lost her first-born. The cry was, not so long ago, "To Berlin! to Berlin!" It would be much wiser and much more patriotic to-day to shout, "To Paris! to Paris!"

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